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TYPHOEUS
OR
THE FUTURE OF SOCIALISM

TO-DAY AND TO-MORROW

*For the Contents of this Series see the end of
the Book*

TYPHOEUS
OR
THE FUTURE OF SOCIALISM

BY
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πάντα χωρεῖ καὶ οὐδὲν μένει

LONDON
KEGAN PAUL, TRENCH, TRUBNER & Co., LTD.
NEW YORK: E. P. DUTTON & Co.
1929

TYPHOEUS

Voices there are in all his dreadful heads
Making sounds unintelligible ; some
God-like, but others as a bull in fury
Bellowing aloud and full of pride untamed,
Others recall the lion's reckless mood,
Or make a noise like puppies, wonderful ;
Again he hisses and the hills resound.
That day had seen a deed beyond recall
With him the master over men and things,
Had not th' All-Father' ghtning glance prevailed.

Hesiod, Theog. 829

CONTENTS

								<i>Page</i>
INTRODUCTION	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7
<i>Chap.</i>								
I	THE AIMS AND MEANS OF							
	SOCIALISM	-	-	-	-	-	-	10
II	RUSSIA	-	-	-	-	-	-	38
III	GERMANY	-	-	-	-	-	-	55
IV	OTHER COUNTRIES	-	-	-	-	-	-	77
V	THE FUTURE	-	-	-	-	-	-	105

TYPHOEUS

OR

THE FUTURE OF SOCIALISM

INTRODUCTION

The war and its consequences have caused a great change in Socialism. The apparently united movement has been split visibly in two, with Socialists on one side and Communists on the other. The writer of a recent book¹ acknowledges the split (which is undeniable), but goes on to observe—"It would be more scientific to say that the war revealed, as under magnesium light, the natural cracks and divergencies already in existence." But the war has done much more than that. It has brought what was merely a political movement up against the practical test of reality, with results unexpected by Socialists and by many anti-Socialists. The war excited a great popular ferment, which

¹ *Hyndman—Prophet of Socialism*, by Frederick J. Gould.

THE FUTURE OF SOCIALISM

brought Socialism to the front with a rush, and imposed upon its adherents the responsibility of governing. The degree of responsibility varied in different countries. It was greatest in the beaten countries, in which the popular discontent with the existing government swept that away, to make place for one more consonant with the wishes of the people ; and it is a tribute to the pre-war advance of Socialism that this was naturally found to be a Socialist administration. Russia is included in the beaten countries ; it was already beaten in spirit in 1917 before the Bolshevik revolution took place. It was indeed that fact that enabled Lenin to make his *coup* after winning over the Petrograd garrison by the promise of peace. But the advance of Socialism was not confined to the defeated countries. It extended to Great Britain, France, Italy and Belgium, to the neutral Scandinavian countries, to the new States and to Australia. The United States of America alone seemed to be exempt from the prevailing movement. Socialist administrations were established in Sweden, Denmark and Great Britain, and Socialists took part in the Governments of Belgium and Czechoslovakia. In Australia all the provinces have Socialist governments, except New South Wales ; and in the Commonwealth

INTRODUCTION

Parliament the Socialists are the largest party.

In short, Socialism was raised by the war from a vague programme to a practical political question, and its future was thereby made a matter of primary interest. It is, indeed, the most important question of the day, far transcending that of peace or war, which has given so much vain trouble at Geneva ; for the only country which is in a position to entertain the idea of war—real war—is the United States of America, which formally abjures it. Those who think that Germany may go to war at any moment are ignorant of the financial position and of the profound change caused there by democratization. If war ever comes again it will be entirely different and waged with different weapons. But Socialism is here now. It has passed through the stage of adolescence and gained its first object—the conquest of political power. That is a great change ; it is a turning-point in the history of our civilization. What will come of it ? In endeavouring to answer this question it is desirable, in the first place, to examine the term “ Socialism ” and its essential meaning ; and, in the second place, to see what use has been made of the power already gained.

CHAPTER I

THE AIMS AND MEANS OF SOCIALISM ?

A friendly German critic has remarked of Socialism (in 1922), that hitherto it has suffered from too much economic programme, and too little clearness of aim. He was thinking of the numerous programmes, all abortive, brought forward on the revolution in Germany. Socialism, he went on, has sought the justification of its economic programme in the programme itself, and thereby elevated it into an end. That is true. But Socialism has aims ; what are they ? It is a movement for the abolition of capitalism, which rests on the private ownership of capital. This is an economic aim, and not enough. At once the question follows—why should capitalism be abolished ? The question demands an answer ; nor is it enough to reply—because it is an evil thing. Particulars are demanded : why is it an evil thing ? The reasoning man must have definite moral grounds for his conviction. The answer is—because it involves injustice,

AIMS AND MEANS OF SOCIALISM

inequality, the exploitation of the many by the few, the division of society into rich and poor, the subjection of the latter, their lack of freedom, their insecurity, especially that caused by the crises due to competitive industry. It is assumed that all these will disappear when Capitalism is abolished, and the co-operative commonwealth is set up ; when the motive of private profit, and the competition engendered by it is removed. That is, I think, a fair statement of the socialist position.

We must put in here a word about " scientific Socialism ", which represents this great change as coming about like the phenomena of Nature by the operation of laws which fulfil themselves with certainty, independently of human will. Neither Marx nor Engels, who formulated the conception, ever acted as though they believed in it. They spent their lives in urging others to what would be a futile proceeding if this were true. Marx was struck by the certainty and authority of science, which is able to predict as well as explain, and he claimed similar authority for his own predictions in a totally different sphere : but he was carried away by his hatred of Capitalism, and said more than he could justify. Bukharin, the Russian Communist expert, has recently revived the idea of scientific Socialism for

THE FUTURE OF SOCIALISM

the purpose of a particular argument ; but the whole Bolshevist revolution is fundamentally opposed to that idea. So far from resembling an act of Nature independent of human will, it was brought about by an intentional act of force, and is maintained by a system of terrorism consciously applied. It professes, indeed, to carry out the Marxian conception ; but no greater contrast can be imagined. The inevitable collapse of the existing order, predicted by Marx, rests on the theory of increasing misery ; but no one any longer pretends that misery has increased under capitalism. On the contrary its diminution is now universally acknowledged. Scientific Socialism is, in truth, quite obsolete.

There remain, however, the evils enumerated above, which Socialism promises to cure. Let us look at them. Four main conceptions stand out among them :— (1) injustice (2) inequality (3) lack of freedom (4) insecurity. The two first deal with distribution, the two last with production. The others are secondary. The division into rich and poor is involved in the idea of inequality ; the subjection of the poor is the same as their lack of freedom ; their insecurity is due to competitive industry. These evils are habitually ascribed to the existing order, but they have not been thought out. This does not matter so long

AIMS AND MEANS OF SOCIALISM

as Socialism is merely attacking. They are counts in the indictment. But when it comes to constructing the new order their relations become important ; it is necessary to have a clear conception of what you are trying to do. Is your object to establish justice or to secure equality ? Many Socialist writers—both new and old—use these terms indiscriminately as though they were equivalents and meant the same thing, whereas they are radically different. From the very start their difference, which has perpetually but unconsciously, torn Socialists asunder, is obvious. The Saint-Simonians in 1830 expressly repudiated equality. Their motto was—From each according to his capacity, to each according to his works ; which is distributive justice. They recognized natural inequality, and insisted on it as the indispensable basis of association. William Thompson, on the other hand, aimed at equality. His book on the Distribution of Wealth, published in 1824, states in the title that it is “ applied to the newly proposed system of the voluntary equality of wealth ”. He was not, however, an out-and-out equalitarian. He thought absolute equality impracticable, but urged “ the utmost possible equality of distribution consistent with security ”. This, he claimed, was based on justice. Nor is there any doubt that what moved the

THE FUTURE OF SOCIALISM

early Socialists in general, was the contrast between the rich and the poor, which they wished to lessen or abolish. Saint-Simon himself had for his immediate object the amelioration of the lot of the poorest and most numerous class, by the re-organization of the economic order under the guidance of the ablest men; and it is certain that if there had not been rich and poor, there would have been no Socialism. But he said nothing about equality, and his school abjured it. So did Fourier and his school still more decidedly, if possible.

I mention these three—Saint-Simon, Fourier and Thompson—because they were the founders of voluntary Socialism; but the same difference runs through them all. They were seldom conscious of the distinction between justice—that is equal treatment—and equality of rewards. They constantly maintained, as did Thompson, that a system of equal rewards was based on justice. And the confusion exists to this day. Marx, however, knew better. He recognized natural inequalities, and though he looked forward to their ultimate disappearance, which would permit of equal rewards under his system of Communism, he perceived that as things and people stand, the right to equal treatment—which is justice—involves unequal rewards. In a letter about the Gotha Programme of the

AIMS AND MEANS OF SOCIALISM

German Socialists in 1875, he put the question quite plainly :—

“ The right of the producer is in proportion to the work rendered : equality consists in their being subject to the same measure—namely work. But one man is physically and mentally superior to another, and consequently does more work in the same time, or can work a longer time ; and work, if it is to be the measure, must be estimated in proportion to its length or intensity. This equal right is unequal right for unequal work. It recognizes no class distinction, because every worker is in the same position, but it tacitly recognizes the unequal endowment and capability as natural privileges. It is, therefore, a right of inequality.”

Most critics of Socialism take equality as its aim. For instance, M. Faguet begins his study of “ Socialism in 1907 ” with the statement :—“ I call socialism every tendency having for its object the *real* equality between men ”.¹ This idea of equality, he says again, is the great productive idea (*idée mère*) of socialism, to which all others are secondary. It is also, he says, the idea of justice—that is of ideal or anti-

¹ *Le Socialisme En. 1907.* p. 1.

THE FUTURE OF SOCIALISM

natural or super-natural justice.¹ It may be so, but it is not the idea of human justice or of divine justice, which states (Matthew xvi. 27)—“He shall reward every man according to his works”. M. Tugan-Baranowsky similarly observes that —“that ideal of equality of men must be recognized as the fundamental ethical tenet of modern socialism”.² Professor Anton Menger, on the other hand, says—“We may characterize the ultimate aims of socialism as economic rights”.³ And he goes on to define the first fundamental right as *the right to the whole produce of labour*, and the second as *the right to subsistence*. “These two fundamental rights mark the limits within which every logical socialistic or communistic system must work.” He adds a third economic right, *the right to labour*, which is, however, only a peculiar modification of the right to subsistence. The first of these rights would secure inequality of rewards on the Marxian principle, when the whole produce was distributed; the second is incompatible with it, and is already granted under capitalism. Menger, however, goes on to observe that—“many socialist systems

¹ Op. cit. p. 107.

² Quoted by Professor Heavenshaw in *A Survey of Socialism*, p. 43.

³ *The Right to the Whole Produce of Labour*, p. 6.

AIMS AND MEANS OF SOCIALISM

recognize not labour, but wants, as the standard of distribution " ; and he mentions in a note Morelly (1753), Brissot (1780), Cabet (1848) and Louis Blanc (1850) as formulating this demand—" From each according to his capacities, to each according to his needs ". He continues :—

" Now, when so many communists speak of an *equal* distribution of wealth in a communistic state, it is this distribution in proportion to wants and existing means of satisfaction to which they refer. For no one could seriously strive for a really equal distribution in the face of the enormous differences in wants due to age, sex and individual character." ¹

He did not reckon with Mr G. B. Shaw, who in 1928 remarks :—

" What the Socialists say is that none of these plans will work well, and that the only satisfactory plan is to give everybody an equal share, no matter what sort of person she (he) is, or how old she (he) is, or what sort of work she (he) does, or who or what her (his) father was ".²

¹ Op. cit., p. 9.

² *The Intelligent Woman's Guide to Socialism and Capitalism*, p. 19.

THE FUTURE OF SOCIALISM

On the other hand, the sarcastic comment of Karl Kautsky, the veteran theorist of the German Socialists, on this interpretation of the socialist idea of equality, runs thus :—

“ What a blessed state of affairs, in which each may work at what and for how long he likes ; and each will find to hand such an abundance of articles of consumption that he may take freely whatever he likes ”.¹

Lenin, having tried this communistic method, reverted to payment by results and premiums for workmen, and also to the re-introduction of technical experts at high salaries.²

It is evident that from the beginning down to the present time the difference between justice and equality, as the aim of Socialism has persisted, and that the question has never been thought out. It is commonly disregarded or slurred over by assuming their identity. The Gotha programme, to which the comment of Marx, given above, refers did this. After stating that “ all members of society have equal rights to the whole product of labour ”,

¹ *The Labour Revolution*, p. 112.

² *Die Nächsten Aufgaben der Sowjet-Macht*, pp. 19, 35.

AIMS AND MEANS OF SOCIALISM

it goes on to say that among other things it is essential that "the product of labour shall be justly distributed". Here the just distribution is equal distribution, since all have equal rights to the whole product. Marx's comment is that this is injustice, and that rights should be unequal. Lenin, writing on this in the summer of 1917 and before his revolution, maintains that equality will be the rule in the first stage of Socialism. "Democracy", he says, "implies equality"; that is, formal equality. But this will not last. "Immediately after the attainment of equality of all members of society in respect of the ownership of the means of production, that is, of equality of labour and equality of wages, man will go on to a further stage, in which the rule will be—from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs." Kautsky, writing in 1924 after his experience in facing the real facts, and trying to introduce Socialism in Germany, turns down both equality and justice. I have quoted his opinion of the equality proposition, but he also says this:—

"Thus the distribution of the social product among the individual workers will not be determined according to the principles of justice, however they may

¹ *The State and Revolution*. By V. J. Ulianov (N. Lenin), p. 102.

THE FUTURE OF SOCIALISM

be formulated, but by the conditions and requirements of production".¹

This is the new Socialism, which raises the hitherto neglected question of production. What is one to make of it all? I might go on quoting the opinion of Socialists and of critics *ad infinitum*, but they would merely reinforce the conclusion that there is no agreement on this important question of the ultimate aims of Socialism. Some advocate equality, others justice, while others again merely aim at improving the conditions of the poor, which is not peculiar to Socialists. In such a state of uncertainty, no practical programme can be generally acceptable.

Then what of liberty? Socialists have always represented the emancipation of wage-earners from the domination of capitalists, and there-with the general advancement of liberty, as one of their principal aims. How does this agree with equality or justice? Freedom is reconcileable with justice, but absolutely incompatible with compulsory equality; and the modern socialist equality is to be compulsory. It was so in Russia when they endeavoured to establish equality there. Lenin said in 1918 after the failure of "workmen's control":—

¹ *The Labour Revolution*, p. 116.

AIMS AND MEANS OF SOCIALISM

The revolution has just struck off the oldest, strongest and heaviest fetters that bound the masses under the knout. That was yesterday, but to-day the same revolution demands, and that in the interests of Socialism, the unquestioning submission of the masses to the single will of the director of the process.¹

Hence the "militarization" of labour and "rigid, iron discipline". Trotsky was still more frank. Writing in 1920 in reply to Kautsky he said that "the principle of compulsory labour service has just as radically and permanently replaced the principle of free hiring as the socialization of the means of production has replaced capitalist property".² And further :—

"If organized economic life is unthinkable without compulsory labour service, the latter is not to be realized without the abolition of the *fiction of the freedom of labour*, and without the substitution for it of the obligatory principle, which is supplemented by real compulsion."³

He also pointed out the diminution of

¹ *Die nächsten Aufgaben der Sowjet-Macht*, p. 51.

² *Terrorism and Communism*, p. 126.

³ *Op. cit.*, p. 131.

THE FUTURE OF SOCIALISM

liberty under State ownership. "Even under capitalism, that is to say, under the régime of 'free' labour, economic pressure is inseparable from legal compulsion. Still more so now." Since all the most important industries were in the hands of the State, a man could not throw up his job. "He cannot go to another factory, for all factories are in the hands of the State, which will not allow such a change." And the State, it is to be observed, was not the old capitalist State, but the new proletarian State. There is no need to argue; the thing has been tried, with the result that freedom disappeared under State Socialism. But Mr G. B. Shaw has shown us how little the advocates of equality care for freedom. He says in his new book:—

"I also made it quite clear that Socialism means equality of income or nothing, and that under Socialism you would not be allowed to be poor. You would be forcibly fed, clothed, lodged, taught and employed, whether you liked it or not".¹

Under equality of income, freedom in production and in consumption both disappear; and, it may be added, production

¹ *The Intelligent Woman's Guide to Socialism and Communism*, p. 470.

AIMS AND MEANS OF SOCIALISM

and consumption disappear too, as they did in Russia. This shows that there is a radical difference between economic equality and other forms, such as political and legal equality. When Babeuf got up his communist conspiracy in 1796, he argued that he was only completing the French revolution, and others have followed him in the same line. They fail to recognize the difference. Political and legal equality are not only compatible with freedom, they are expressions of it. They are artificial systems intended to express it. They are not perfect, but, as our history has developed in the direction of increasing freedom, they have evolved in the same direction, and will apparently continue to evolve. They are important, but their importance is of an entirely different character from that of economic equality. Economic activities are primary; our daily life depends on them. They concern every individual from day to day; whereas political life only occupies the electors occasionally, when they vote for the candidates, who present themselves, or refrain from voting, if they please. For the rest they are merely spectators; and if Parliament were closed for a year or two, it would make no perceptible difference. It does close for several months. Its chief standing function is control of the executive through publicity,

THE FUTURE OF SOCIALISM

and it does not do that very well. As for the law courts, the great bulk of the population have nothing to do with them at all ; if any do, it is through their own fault or (in rare cases) by bad luck. But everyone is a consumer, and nearly everyone is in some sort a producer, except those incapacitated by age or illness. Production and consumption go on continually. If they did not, if they ceased, we should all infallibly die within a very short time. Consequently the existing economic order is not an arbitrary system, like politics or the law, which can be and are changed in a moment, but a living organism. It undergoes constant change, but always in instinctive response to needs and wishes of the men who form it. It has changed a great deal within living memory ; and it is still changing, chiefly through the results of invention and of science, which give us more command over Nature, who is the sole original source of all material wealth.

Marx was quite right when he made economy the basis of our life, but wrong when he made ideas dependent on the economic factor. If that were so, there would be no change. Now the change that has been proceeding in this sphere has had the effect of making the problem of management more and more important, and, at the same time, more difficult to solve.

AIMS AND MEANS OF SOCIALISM

Success depends more than ever before on singling out the right man to manage ; and the reason why compulsory economic equality is disastrous is that it drags down the more capable to the level of the less. It had that effect in Russia. If men were entirely different from what they are ; if they cared nothing about rewards and were only eager to do their best for the community, then equality might work. But *homo sapiens* is not like that, with rare exceptions, among whom Socialists are not conspicuous. And to suppose that compulsory equality will make him like that is to indulge in an idle dream. But even if it were not so, the desire for freedom in consumption—which is chiefly the woman's business—would remain. We see what happens in the business of the co-operative societies, which are voluntary. The profit is distributed in proportion to the purchases ; that is, justly. If it were proposed to alter the arrangement and give each member an equal share, what would be the effect ? An immediate revolt of the members against such a violation of justice. If, again, they were forced to buy everything from the store, the women at least would revolt against the abolition of the free choice they get at present from the market and the shops, which always surround the store.

THE FUTURE OF SOCIALISM

It is futile and silly to attribute these and similar re-actions to *bourgeois* prejudice, which will disappear under socialism. Man's love of equal treatment, which is justice, and woman's love of free choice are integral parts of their character, displayed alike by primitive savages, and by the most convinced communists.

There remains the fourth aim of Socialism, namely, the abolition of the present insecurity caused by competition for profit and its replacement by co-operation. Not a few still regard this as the most essential aim, but a great change has taken place in regard to competition. Many Socialists lay stress on its absence through combination. They now argue that competition has on the whole worked out for the general benefit in the past, but that the growth of combination in industry has rendered it obsolete, and threatens the community with monopoly prices. A recent Socialist writer states the benefit derived from competition as follows :—

“ From the beginning of the age of steam and machinery to the last quarter of the nineteenth century, prices, with fluctuations mostly slight over brief periods, fell, and both money wages and real wages (that is, wages considered in relation to prices) rose. Capitalism was

AIMS AND MEANS OF SOCIALISM

- operating in such a way as to raise the standard of life for the people—not anything like so much as it might have been raised under a more rational system of society, in view of the enormous and unprecedented increase in the forces of production it is true, but, nevertheless, securing an improvement.”¹

“These, then, were the influences—increased competition, increased output, and improved transport, nationally and internationally—which caused the standard of living to rise throughout the greater part of the nineteenth century”².

He also quotes Mr and Mrs Webb to a similar effect. But they do not note that the competition, which produced the rising standard of living, was the very thing that the Socialists formerly found fault with and wished to abolish. Competition was held to be the great evil, which necessarily pressed down the workers under the iron law of wages. Now it is the absence of competition that they fear. In other words, their concern is now for the consumers in this matter, not for the producers, as it used to be. This radical change of objective has not been noticed, which shows

¹ *The Modern Case for Socialism*. By A. W. Humphrey, p. 90.

² *Op. cit.*, p. 92.

THE FUTURE OF SOCIALISM

how little thought has been bestowed on the aim. Fear of the working of competition has proved to be ill-founded. It has not been allowed to exercise the disastrous effects anticipated, but has been prevented; partly by the organization of workmen in trade unions, and partly by factory laws, which Socialists did not foresee. Their present fears of combination may prove equally ill-founded. It is true that combines of different kinds have been increasing steadily and rapidly in the present century, but so far the movement has been in the general interest. The primary object has been to stabilize the market and prevent the fluctuations of trade, which are called crises on the Continent. These alternations used to be very severe; now they are much less so, as Werner Sombart shows in his great work on *Modern Capitalism*. And this is decidedly in the general interest. The combinations have not done away with competition, nor resulted in monopoly prices. The public have the power to protect themselves, and will certainly use it, if it be necessary, without any Socialism. There is no reason why they should not enjoy the benefits of combination, without the evils feared by Socialists. Besides the effect of stabilizing the market, combines are highly economical; they reduce the cost of production in many

AIMS AND MEANS OF SOCIALISM

ways. But Socialists, who wish to eliminate the private capitalist, grasp at the contradictory principles of competition and combination as the reason for doing so, without perceiving the contradiction.

Uncertainty of aims has naturally led to division about means. Since voluntary Socialism gave place to compulsory Socialism in the 'forties, there have been five main ideas of the form it should take. There was, first, the idea of co-operative workshops established with State aid, but run by the persons employed. This was Louis Blanc's idea, published in the *Organization of Labour* (1839-40), attempted in Paris in 1848 and taken up afterwards by Lassalle. It is the plan adopted in the Gotha Programme of 1875. Secondly there was the idea of Constantin Pecqueur, published in 1842, that the State should own and control all capitalist enterprises. This was taken up by Marx, and was for many years generally regarded as the essential change demanded by Socialists. It took the form of "nationalization" or "socialization" and held the field. The Erfurt Programme of 1891 does not definitely mention the State; that was avoided, to prevent controversy. It speaks only of the conversion of capitalist private ownership into "social ownership", and of production for the market being trans-

THE FUTURE OF SOCIALISM

formed into "socialistic production carried on for and by society"; but since the State was the only representative of society, it was clearly indicated, as is admitted by Kautsky. The first attack on this plan was made by the French Syndicalists, who from 1902 formed a definite movement. They objected to State-ownership on the ground that it would materially diminish instead of increasing their liberty. They demanded the ownership and control of businesses for the trade unions, and that is still their attitude. It is the third plan. Attempts to transplant the movement to other countries were not very successful; but the fact of a revolt of the intended beneficiaries against the State made a deep impression upon Socialism. It led to the formulation of Guild Socialism, which is the fourth idea. This proposed ownership by the State, but control by all the persons engaged in an industry, including the technical staffs. Guild Socialism differed from Louis Blanc's plan in this respect, and still more in that the State was to be the owner. An attempt was made after the war to introduce the system in the building trade, and for a short time it enjoyed plentiful support and seemed to be doing well; but it broke down, mainly through internal defects, and since then little has been heard of Guild Socialism.

AIMS AND MEANS OF SOCIALISM

The attack of Syndicalism on State Socialism was re-inforced by the discovery that bureaucracy, which is inseparable from ownership and control by the State, is eminently inefficient. This discovery was made before the war. In fact M. Vandervelde, the Belgian Socialist leader, had written a book entitled *Le Socialisme contre L'État*, which presented the problem, before the war broke out. But the revolutions on the Continent that followed the war brought the question into the full light of day, and radically changed the conception of Socialists. Kautsky states both the old and the new conceptions :—

“ There has grown up the conception of a Socialist system of production marked by extreme uniformity. All businesses are to be transformed into State undertakings like the post-office and the railways, and directed by the official bureaucracy ! ”¹

But, he continues :—

“ Now one may cherish the most various ideas concerning Socialist production, but one thing is certain ; the official bureaucracy, by virtue of its history and nature, is the most unsuitable agency for the establishment of Socialist production.” ²

¹ *The Labour Revolution*, p. 155. ² *Op. cit.*, p. 165.

THE FUTURE OF SOCIALISM

It is "clumsy, uneconomical, without means for selecting the most suitable persons for particular functions". He quotes Otto Bauer, the eminent Austrian Socialist:—"nobody manages industrial undertakings worse than the State".¹ It is curious, by-the-by, to notice the unanimity with which the State is denounced in this connection by Socialist leaders, when once its deficiencies have been recognized. They make out that they have always been against it, and quote Marx's ideas on the "withering away" of the State—which he borrowed from Saint-Simon—in proof; but they do not explain why they have allowed everybody to think the contrary, or what will happen while the State is withering away. In most of the present programmes the need of avoiding bureaucracy, which found no place before, is definitely stated. How do they propose to avoid bureaucracy?

Briefly, by separating the commercial functions of the State from its political functions, and giving the management of State enterprises a free hand. It was the attempt to solve this problem, which provoked the comment quoted at the beginning of the chapter. It has been tried on a comprehensive scale in Russia, with the results stated in the next chapter. It has been applied to existing State enterprises,

¹ Op. cit., p. 207.

AIMS AND MEANS OF SOCIALISM

such as mines and railways, but not to private enterprises, in Germany, Austria, Belgium and other countries. This is the fifth idea. It may be held to be the latest and most prevalent plan in general, but great diversity in particulars exists. The aim is to increase the production of State enterprises, while at the same time giving those employed a voice in the management, through the composition of the controlling body. In effect, it is a tacit endorsement of the aims of French syndicalists, as expressed in their motto—*bien-être et liberté* : that is, well-being and liberty. These are the real aims of the "proletariate". They want to be better off and to have more liberty. For material equality they care not at all, as may be seen from the placid acceptance of rich men as socialistic comrades. They do not want to pull down anybody, unless they think his downfall would benefit themselves. The class-war is, in truth, played out. Some atrabilious individuals may cherish envy, and hate the rich man, but that is a matter of temperament, not of principle. They would play the rich man themselves, if they could. The bulk of the poor, who enjoy life far more than those who pity them, in no wise envy the rich their possessions. For justice they care much, and bitterly resent unjust treatment. But what they primarily want

THE FUTURE OF SOCIALISM

is more comfort and freedom, as not only men in general but all creatures do. And the comfort comes first. It is of no use to give them this, that and the other, if the price paid is to be worse off. And that is why the continuance and improvement of production are supremely important for Socialists.

The great effect of the war and of the experience in governing, to which it has led, has been to put the problem of production in its proper place as the first requisite to be fulfilled. Hitherto it has been simply taken for granted that not only would the productivity attained under Capitalism continue under Socialism, but that it would be increased and, instead of merely making the rich richer, would be turned to the benefit of all. It is hardly necessary to prove this, which is written broad-cast over Socialist literature; but an extract from the authoritative Erfurt Programme of 1891 will suffice :—

“ Only the conversion of capitalist private ownership of the means of production—land and soil, mines and pits, raw materials, tools, machines, means of transport—into social ownership, and transformation of production for the market into socialistic production carried on for and by society, can bring about

AIMS AND MEANS OF SOCIALISM

the conversion of the large industry and the constantly increasing productivity of social labour, from a source of misery and oppression for the hitherto exploited classes, into a source of the highest welfare and all-round harmonious perfection."

The means of production are taken over without any loss, and the constantly increasing productivity, attained under capitalism, goes on increasing. That is the assumption, which has been generally accepted without any doubt of its validity or any inquiry. It is still generally accepted in this country. Mr Humphrey, whose admission of the benefits derived from capitalism has been quoted above, sums up the case thus:—

"Summing up, therefore, we may say that the socialization of industry would result in a greater production of wealth, a better quality of wealth, and a more even distribution of wealth".¹

This conclusion is drawn from two chapters dealing with the "Theory of Public Enter-

¹ *The Modern Case for Socialism.* By A. W. Humphrey, p. 247.

THE FUTURE OF SOCIALISM

prise in Industry ” and “ Public Enterprise in Action ”, stating some of the evils of capitalism, from which public enterprise would free us, and giving examples of successful public enterprise at home and abroad, in spite of the condemnation of bureaucracy ; but he ignores the fact that the limited class of enterprises enumerated were either built up previously by private enterprise or the advances made—by the Post Office for instance—were forced upon it by private enterprise. He assumes that such advances will continue under socialization, and that the “ enormous and unprecedented increase in the forces of production ”—admittedly created by capitalism—will go on unimpaired. That is the traditional attitude of Socialists, and still held by many here. It is expressed in the slogan of the Independent Labour Party, “ Socialism in our time ”, and by the programme which the leader of the Labour Party has described as a “ programme of flashy futilities ”. He himself, having shouldered the responsibilities of governing, knows better. He has, no doubt, followed the fortunes of Socialists in other countries, and has learnt from them. There is much to learn from them. And the first lesson of all is that production comes first. The transition must be effected without any cessation of production or any diminution.

AIMS AND MEANS OF SOCIALISM

Here no easy assumption will do, when you are dealing with realities ; there must be certainty. Let us look at the foreign countries, and see how the problem of production has presented itself there.

CHAPTER II

RUSSIA

Russia is the first country to be examined, because full socialization has been tried out there ; it is the only one in which a complete Marxian turnover has ever been attempted. Lenin started out full of confidence. He saw the vast natural resources of Russia and declared that the "exploitation of these resources would form the basis of a hitherto unknown progress of productive forces". In saying this he was merely repeating the current-belief of Socialists. There were difficulties, no doubt, as he had discovered ; he frankly acknowledged them, but they could be and would be overcome. In particular they were in a backward state on the constructive side through lack of technical knowledge and inferior discipline—two points on which the critics of Socialism have always said that it would fail—but these could be made good. This was in a report to the central executive committee in the spring of 1918, when he had already made some discoveries. He had begun by committing two cardinal mistakes

RUSSIA

in dealing with the peasantry on the one hand, and with the proletariat or urban work-people on the other. He had issued a decree abolishing the private ownership of land, intending to organize rural production on a community basis; but this plan fell through, because the peasants refused to accept it. Their interpretation of the decree, was to take the land of the large estate-owners and keep it for themselves, which they promptly did; they had no use for community farming. And so they have remained to this day. A recent fresh attempt to establish communities has failed, and been abandoned.

At the same time control of the factories was handed over to the workmen employed in them by another decree. The employers were not turned out by the Soviet Government at first, but the workmen in control were not disposed to take orders from anybody, which led to quarrels and the expulsion of the employers and the technical staffs. Then, when the proletariat proved incapable of managing by themselves, the Government began to take over the factories without compensation on the ground that the owners had failed to carry out the decree of November, 1917. But the workmen had been bitten by the idea of Syndicalism, and conflicts ensued, which made an attempted system of joint control

THE FUTURE OF SOCIALISM

impossible. Gradually the Government advanced, step by step, in the process of nationalizing industry combined with ever-increasing stringency of control. The syndicalist element, denounced by Lenin, had to be suppressed by force. The experience is particularly interesting, because the prevailing idea of Socialists to-day is joint control by the workmen and the State. It failed completely in Russia. Eventually all the large industries were nationalized, and labour was militarized ; everyone had to join a trade union, and everyone had to work under "rigid iron discipline", and to yield "unquestioning obedience to the orders of the director of the process", who was a member of the Communist Party.

Meanwhile an attempt was made to instal a plan, prepared by Bukharin, of organized production by calculation. The market and the banks were abolished, and the use of money nearly ceased. The idea was to bring together the two blades of "the scissors"—rural and urban production—by seizing the agricultural produce and rationing the town population, in return for which the rural population were to be provided with the urban goods they required through the co-operative societies. By 1921 the plan had completely failed, primarily through lack of production. Neither side

~ RUSSIA

fulfilled its share, and production fell progressively. On the rural side, much land had gone out of cultivation, and in what remained the peasants restricted their production to their own needs, or hid the rest. On the urban side the failure was still greater. In 1920 the production, measured in gold roubles, was only 13.9 per cent. of the 1912 level in large and medium-scale industry, and 26.4 per cent. in the small industry. According to a statement made by Kameneff at the All-Russian Congress, in the spring of 1921, productivity had fallen to 20 per cent. of the pre-war level. The facts, it may be mentioned, are all corroborated by the Soviet's own statistics.

At the beginning of 1921, some serious occurrences drew Lenin's attention to the economic situation. One was a mutiny among sailors at Cronstadt in January; another was the occurrence of bread riots in Petrograd. He felt that the state of things could not be allowed to continue, and he evolved the new economic policy, which meant, as he frankly admitted, the re-introduction of capitalism. He told the 10th Congress of the Communist Party in March 1921, that only an understanding with the peasants could preserve the revolution, and that they must have some freedom in commercial transactions. It took the form of permitting them to sell freely such

THE FUTURE OF SOCIALISM

portions of their produce as remained after surrendering the amount levied for taxation. It looks a small concession, but it had vast consequences. In the first place it re-established the market and the use of money, which necessitated the revival of banks; in the second place, it restored the private trader in the functions of buying and selling; and in the third place, it re-introduced the principles of supply and demand, with the element of competition between the co-operative societies and the private trader. In effect, the whole situation was gradually changed. The private trader seized the opportunity so well, that in 1923 no less than 64 per cent. of all commercial transactions and 83 per cent. of the retail trade was in his hands. The co-operative societies were unable to compete with him; they had been bureaucratized against their will, and had lost their initiative. There never was so signal a victory for private enterprise. Everyone who could dealt with the private trader, and the State concerns among the rest. The state of things was concisely stated in the official paper of the trade unions, which had ceased to be compulsory on the adoption of the new economic policy, and had gradually reverted to their normal functions:—

“ When the co-operatives supply only

RUSSIA

a quarter of the workers' needs, when they are inefficient in trade, and fail to consider the needs of their customers, when they are unable to treat purchasers politely, to reduce their over-head charges, and get rid of their useless expenditure, does anyone think that they will amend their ways, for the sole reason that the workers are obliged to make all their purchases at the co-operative shop? Where we have hitherto failed to capture the market, private trade is discharging a function of public utility" (*Trood*, 19th April, 1924).

This was in answer to the decision of the Government to embark on a campaign against private trading. It had been too successful, and threatened the whole system of Socialism, as Lenin had anticipated that it might. It had greatly increased production, and satisfied both the peasants and the workmen; but because it had grown so rapidly, and been so successful, the Government, who no longer had Lenin to guide their counsels, felt that something must be done to check it. An extreme element urged its suppression by force, but a more moderate policy prevailed. This consisted in harrying the private traders with all the devices of the OGPU—espionage, denunciation, arrest, penalties,

THE FUTURE OF SOCIALISM

confiscation and expulsion—on the one hand, and speeding up the co-operative societies and the State trusts on the other. The result was that 250,000 shops were closed, 400,000,000 gold roubles were extracted, and private trading, harried in several other ways, fell from 64 per cent. to 39.3 per cent. of the total; while the efforts to stimulate the co-operatives and the State trusts by orders and injunctions to increase production, completely failed, and only threw them into greater disorder. The effects were so disastrous that the policy was abandoned in 1925, and free trading was again encouraged. This went on until 1928 and all the subsequent increase of production, which has been well advertized, must be attributed to it.

This year (1928) much has happened. Information is incomplete, but it is possible to gain some idea of what is occurring. The Government, with the Communist Party behind them, remain true to their ideals, with the exception of a remarkable offer to private capital to assist in solving the building problem in Moscow. It consists of a measure passed by the Soviet of People's Commissars allowing private capital to build, own and let houses with complete freedom and a guarantee of immunity from all official interference and of relief from income tax. Nothing could show the failure

RUSSIA

of the Government to deal with housing in Moscow better than this remarkable proposal, which is an attempt to re-introduce capitalism in the building industry under more favourable conditions than those prevailing in any capitalist country. On the other hand the raising of the peasants' taxation by 25 per cent. and the new land policy are all in the old order, but appear to have suffered a sudden check. In April the Red Parliament passed the budget, including the advance in the peasants' taxes; but in July a decree of the People's Commissaries, signed by Rykoff, instructed the local authorities to cease the confiscation of grain and prohibited the prosecution of peasants for refusal to sell their grain, together with other concessions. As to the land policy, the law embodying it was postponed in April; but in defending it interesting speeches were made by Kalinin and Stalin. The former said that the Government had done much; it had attacked and crippled the *kulaks*, the richer peasants, and had established class warfare throughout the villages of the Soviet Union. It intended to devote attention to the poorer peasantry as soon as possible. Stalin, in a speech made at a party conference in Moscow, said that the new land policy had not been introduced before because "three years ago they needed

THE FUTURE OF SOCIALISM

the energetic richer peasant to extend the cultivated area. It would have been most silly to attack him then. The peasants believed in the land policy and developed agriculture. Now that they had reached the pre-war acreage of cultivation with the help of the *kulak*, they could safely destroy him, and use the surplus land to form collective farms."

That was in April, and evidently the *kulaks*, admitted by Stalin to be the energetic peasants, had been attacked. But in July such a crisis had occurred that it became necessary to stop the oppression. Rykoff, who signed the decree mentioned above, said in a speech to the Moscow Communists that "he had been mistaken in thinking the grain crisis only temporary; it was serious and had created dissatisfaction among the peasant masses. The oppression of the peasants had not liquidated the crisis. It was necessary to put an end to this oppression, and the *plenum* had even advocated raising the price of grain. There were serious discussions in the Communist Party regarding the peasant policy. Many were in favour of ceasing the struggle with the *kulaks* and of leaving the peasants to their own devices." ¹ That has apparently now been done. There is no doubt about the crisis. Russia, the great wheat-export-

¹ *The Times*, July 20, 1928.

RUSSIA

ing country, has been scouring the world for grain and buying wheat to the extent of hundreds of thousands of tons, and the recent concessions to the peasants indicate anxiety on the part of the Government with regard to the coming year (1929).

Meanwhile, the trial of engineers and others in the Don Basin had taken place, but this was only a prelude to extensive investigation of the national trusts. The Central Control Commission of the Communist Party proclaimed a general "war on bureaucratization" and the Soviet Press announced that hostilities had begun on a wide front. The authorities had discovered that the "entire machinery of industrialization was being jammed and partially ruined by mismanagement and squandering." This bore out the complaints of the miners in the Don Basin; they attributed the trouble, not to any anti-revolutionary plot, but simply to the incapacity and negligence of their own Communist officials and to the prevalence of drunkenness, which is fully confirmed by Soviet newspapers. The anti-revolutionary plot appears to be an invention on the part of the Ogpu. The report of Schwartz, chairman of the miners' union, who headed an official inquiry into the conditions, declared that the workmen's discontent was due to mismanagement by the administra-

THE FUTURE OF SOCIALISM

tion more than to the faults of engineers and specialists, and gave an account of the housing and food conditions, which explain the dissatisfaction and low out-put of the men. Thousands of them live in barracks, and many have no beds, but sleep on the bare boards. The account was confirmed by the *Trood* of March 22, which spoke of the prevalence of damp, dirt, absence of sufficient ventilation, lack of sufficient beds (a single bed must often suffice for several workers, who sleep in it in turns), the crowding of several families into one dwelling and sometimes into one room; and by the *Pravda* of April 27. Schwartz's report further stated that the management often did not observe the collective contracts made with the men.

The anxieties of the Government have been further increased by the results of the Soviet policy in regard to concessions, which has led to a tendency on the part of foreign *concessionaires* to withdraw. These concessions formed an integral part of the new economic policy, but they have been disappointingly few, and have shown a general tendency to grow fewer because of the conditions imposed. The Government badly needs foreign capital, and one means of getting it was by concessions, especially to American and German capitalists. One of the largest contracts was made in 1925

RUSSIA

with the American firm of Harriman's for the exploitation of manganese ore in Georgia. It was for 20 years, but has already come to an end. Harriman's have found it impossible to go on under the system of Government interference, and breach of contract, and have withdrawn. Another item of intelligence shows that the attack on the *kulaks* and the new land policy were accompanied by measures directed against the small capitalists. The præsidium of the Red Parliament had received information about the closing down of some 5,000 small leather factories, and issued instructions to the local authorities to rescind those measures, and return part of the goods confiscated. The fact was that the small factories produced much cheaper goods than the State concerns, and they were closed in order to suppress competition. That has now been given up.

Soviet Russia is really in a bad way. So far from realizing the "unknown progress of productive forces", to which Lenin looked forward, his successors find themselves in straitened circumstances, and surrounded by increasing difficulties. I have dwelt upon this great experiment at some length because it is rich in lessons. Everything has been tried there, as it could not be elsewhere. For Russia is a rich and self-supporting country; it was a grain-

THE FUTURE OF SOCIALISM

exporting land, and it has vast natural resources in ores, fuel, timber, raw chemicals and water-power; its intellectuals were highly intelligent and cultivated. Even there it required extraordinary courage and the confidence of fanaticism to attempt a complete Marxian turnover. It has cost them many millions of lives, but in any more advanced country it would be quite impossible, because all the sources of wealth dried up, quite apart from the "heavy civil war", which was part of the policy, and the campaign of terrorism under the Tcheka, which has continued to this day, and rendered every man's life insecure. Lenin, the author of it all, never contemplated anything of the kind. He never anticipated the economic consequences of his policy. That is obvious from his re-introduction of capitalism in the new economic policy, which was a plain confession of failure due to mistakes and one requiring great courage to make.

They began by attempting to impose a system of Communism, though how they could have supposed it possible passes comprehension. The peasantry, who form over four-fifths of the population, resisted from the first, and have continued to resist until this day; it broke down on their resistance, because they refused to produce. That is the first lesson, and we may be

RUSSIA

quite sure that agriculturists would do the same everywhere. The town workmen did not resist. They were the proletarians, and was it not a proletarian revolution? They were given control of the factories over the employer and his staff, with whom they quarrelled of course. Their notion was to have an easy time, and they proved incapable of managing the concern. This is not a new discovery, nor was it due to the singular incapacity of Russian workmen. The same experiment has been repeatedly tried here with miners, engineers and others; but, as Trotsky says, "there is nothing worse than a board of ignorant, badly prepared workers appointed to a practical post, demanding expert knowledge".¹ They failed and the Government had to come to their rescue. It stepped in, superseding the employer without compensation, and attempted joint control, which also failed. That is the second lesson, the importance of which has been already noted. There followed the militarization of labour, abolition of "the fiction of the freedom of labour" (Trotsky) and the absolute compulsion which Syndicalists fear. It could be maintained only by force and terrorism, as it was. But men will not work under such compulsion and production fell continuously

¹ L. Trotsky. *Terrorism and Communism*, p. 152.

THE FUTURE OF SOCIALISM

until 1921, when Communism was abandoned, and the new economic policy re-introduced a measure of free trading, which entailed a complete change of system. That is the third lesson.

Lenin called it State Capitalism, but it is more commonly known as Socialism. How has it fared? It has done better than the old system, but only in so far as free enterprise has been permitted to play its part. There have been two attempts to suppress free trading, in 1924 and 1928, and both have had to be given up after a very short experience. The recent measures taken against the State trusts are most enlightening; for the trusts have been de-bureaucratized, separated from the political activities of the State and commercialized, according to the theory of modern Socialism. But they are under the control of the Communist Party, to which their inefficiency and corruption can be traced. For years the economic authorities have been crying out for more production, but there have been two great obstacles (1) the lack of capital (2) the control by the Communist Party. With regard to (1) they were at first flushed with capital because they seized everything without compensation, a method opposed by Socialists in general. But it did not last long. Capital must be continually renewed out

RUSSIA

of the profits of production, and there were no profits, because of the system adopted. Plant could not be renewed or maintained in an efficient State, and for the same reason transport failed. Engines broke down, and the whole system became disorganized. Every effort was made to secure the required capital both at home and from abroad, but with only small success. At home free trading and heavy taxation relieved the strain, and abroad concessions and credits were at first fairly successful; but both have been sacrificed to maintaining the system.

In home policy there have been since 1923 two parties in the State, one for being guided by economic necessity, the other for upholding what is called Leninism at all costs, though Lenin himself proved capable of yielding to economic necessity. The vacillating policy pursued, and recently illustrated by the oppression of the *kulaks* and then by its abandonment, may be ascribed to the alternating success of these two parties. But abroad there seems to be only one policy, and that is to stir up revolution. This is an article of faith to the Soviet, and it has greatly affected their credit. What they would gain now by the success of such a hopeless proposition, which has been defeated and denounced in one country after another, it is impossible to

THE FUTURE OF SOCIALISM

see. Presumably they expect that it would ensure better treatment and free credit for themselves ; but with the other countries reduced, as they would be, to a worse plight than Russia, that would last only a very short time. There is no way out of their difficulty, no way to increase production, but the encouragement of free enterprise ; there is no way to win the confidence of other Governments but a complete abandonment of revolutionary tactics. But so long as the Communist Party or their nominees are in power, they can do neither. They are gulled by their foreign agents, who perhaps believe it themselves, that other countries are on the verge of revolution. It is a complete delusion, but it serves to keep up their hopes.

Socialism is better than Communism, but it is not good enough. It does not produce enough. The central authorities may proclaim war on bureaucracy ; but since the State trusts are managed by members of the Communist Party, bureaucracy is inevitable because the Communist Party is a political body, which looks first after its own interest. And just the same with the co-operative societies and the trade unions, which possess no freedom, but are tied and bound to the Communist Party. The only successful element is the free enterprise, and that only in so far as it is free.

CHAPTER III

GERMANY

The case of Germany is totally different, yet it teaches the same lesson, the primary importance of production. The revolution there left the Socialists in complete power. They had been divided by the war into three groups—(1) majority Socialists, (2) independent Socialists, and (3) Spartacists or Communists. In the immense turmoil that followed the defeat of the army, and the complete break-up of the political system, nobody knew what would happen, or who would come out on top. Only the Socialists counted, but it was uncertain which group had or would have the largest following. However, on the 10th of November, 1918, the day after the Kaiser's abdication, the matter was amicably settled between the majority and the independent Socialists—the right and left wing—by setting up a provisional Government in the form of a Council of People's Commissaries consisting of an equal number from each wing, with a majority Socialist as President.

THE FUTURE OF SOCIALISM

The Communists were left out, but the title—Council of People's Commissaries—was taken from Russia and reveals the influence of that example. Nor did it stop there. The revolutionary movement arose spontaneously among the people and the soldiers and sailors. Beginning with an insurrection at Kiel in October, it spread rapidly and followed the example of Russia by the formation of Soviet's or Workers' and Soldiers' Councils. They were everywhere, but without unity or a definite purpose. The empire was already broken up in the first week of November, before the abdication of the Kaiser. However, German discipline prevailed, and the Provisional Government was peacefully appointed at a General meeting of Socialists in Berlin on the 10th of November. There was no disorder because there was no opposition, though trouble arose later and was widely distributed, with the assassination of prominent personages ; but the immediate result of the revolution was to place the united Socialists in complete power. What did they do ?

Suddenly faced by the practical problem of administration they found themselves without a policy. They had paid no attention to the constructive side of socialization, on which Marx had left them without any guidance. The Erfurt Programme, formu-

GERMANY

lated in 1891, had remained in force, though somewhat damaged by the revisionists. But their criticism was directed to the Marxian theory of increasing misery, leading to the spontaneous collapse of the existing system. They argued that misery had not increased but had diminished and was diminishing. They set up no alternative theory to that of "Scientific Socialism", and merely demanded revision of the programme in so far as it was inconsistent with the actual facts. They were, in short, opportunists who did not mind saying so. The split weakened the Socialists but did nothing to provide a policy for socialization, which was ignored in the Erfurt Programme, beyond a statement of general principles. Its working part consisted entirely of democratic and social reforms. Consequently they were at a loss when the end of the war suddenly realized their political aim and placed them in power. It was true that they had the Russian example before them, and the German Workers' and Soldiers' Councils would have been pleased enough to follow it. They did try, and for a time the issue was doubtful. But fortunately for Germany, the Socialists there were overwhelmingly Menshevist; not only the majority or right wing Socialists but most of the independent section too. They looked askance at Russia, and they were

THE FUTURE OF SOCIALISM

too strong for the Communist element, which favoured it. What they did was to appoint a Commission of Inquiry into socialization, with special reference to the coal-mining industry.

It was appointed on the 18th of November, with instructions to lose no time ; for the people were clamouring for socialization, which they had been led to expect. It consisted of twelve of the leading Socialists and economists ; and Karl Kautsky, who had drafted the Erfurt Programme, was the chairman. On the 10th of December they reported to the Soldiers' and Workers' Councils that no immediate steps could be taken, that the existing system must be retained, in order to restore production and trade, and that the advance to socialization must be made gradually, beginning with coal and iron as the industries most ripe for the process. In spite of this opinion, the Congress of Workers' and Soldiers' Councils held before the end of December, objected to the proposed postponement and called on the Government to begin the process of socialization at once. The Commission took no notice of this, but continued its labours and produced a report on the 15th of February, 1919, dealing with the coal industry. Two important differences distinguish coal-mining in Germany and England. The first is that in Germany

GERMANY

a considerable portion of the mines are already nationalized ; the second is that the privately owned mines are already organized in the combines known as Kartells. The result of these differences was that the Commission had before them two sets of experience which do not exist in England. They were unanimously of opinion that the privately owned and Kartellized mines constituted a virtual monopoly, which was incompatible with the character of the modern State, let alone the socialistic State ; and that its nationalization was far more generally demanded in the public interest than in England or America. At the same time they were agreed that the existing form of nationalization was radically bad and in need of complete transformation. They gave reasons for this opinion ; namely, that the bureaucratic administration of the State mines was, on several detailed grounds, thoroughly un-economic. All extension of the State concern was un-economic and to be rejected, so long as its economic activity was not completely separated from its political and administrative functions. But they forbore to state the actual harm done by the private mines. Nor did they enter on the question of competition between the two sets of mines, which is sometimes put forward by Socialists as a reason for starting State enterprises, as in Australia.

THE FUTURE OF SOCIALISM

They added the observation that the isolated nationalization of the coal mines could not be considered as socialization, so long as capitalist enterprise persisted in other industries ; it would be merely changing one employer for another. They further agreed on the position of the miners. The principle of democracy was to be carried into industry by granting the miners representation on the administrative bodies to be set up and giving them a say in prescribing conditions directly affecting themselves ; but not giving them control over the technical management of the mines.

So far the Commissioners were agreed, but on the actual proposals they were divided. There were two proposals for socializing the mining industry. The majority proposal was signed by seven members of the Commission, including four professors of economics ; Kautsky and Hué were absent from Berlin, and Robert Schmidt also did not sign. The minority proposal was signed by two members. It is unnecessary to enter into details, because neither plan was adopted ; but it may be observed that the first plan provided for " full socialization ", the second advocated a more gradual advance.

In the meanwhile much had happened politically since the appointment of the

GERMANY

Commission in November, 1918, and the atmosphere was changed. The struggle between a parliamentary and a Soviet system was decided in favour of the former, which was supported by the Congress of Workers' and Soldiers' Councils on 16th December, 1918. They agreed to a National Assembly, which should replace the provisional Government (from which the three Independent Socialists resigned on 29th December), and prepare a Constitution for the German Republic. The National Assembly was elected on 19th January, 1919, and met at Weimar on 6th February, nine days before the Commission issued their report. The chance of the Socialists was over, for the elections to the National Assembly had placed them in a minority. They had 185 seats (majority Socialists 163, independent Socialists 22) in a house of 421. The Communists, who had coalesced into a regular party on 30th December, 1918, were not represented. But the Socialists were still the largest of the numerous parliamentary parties, as they had been before the war, and they entered a coalition Government, taking eight out of sixteen administrative seats, while Ebert, formerly the head of the purely Socialist administration, was elected President of the Republic. In the numerous general elections and changes of administration which followed

THE FUTURE OF SOCIALISM

in the distracted country, they have never regained their ascendancy, but rather lost ground, though again united under the most democratic constitution, until 1928, when they gained 153 seats and once more took part in a coalition Government. But by this time the Communist Party, which had been joined by left-wing independents, had increased their parliamentary strength to 54 ; and they are the determined enemies of the Socialists.

To return to my narrative. I said just now that with the election of the National Assembly the chance of the Socialists was over. I meant the chance of doing what they pleased, which had been theirs from 9th November, 1918 to 6 February, 1919. But though they were in a minority in the National Assembly, and had to meet the criticism of opponents, they still held half the ministerial appointments, and carried great weight, particularly in the highly disturbed state of the country. Accordingly the National Assembly passed on 23rd March, a general socialization law. The first clause of this law declares it the moral duty of every German so to employ his powers as the common weal may demand, and guarantees work or maintenance. The second Clause runs thus :—

The Reich is authorized by way of

GERMANY

legislation and with fitting compensation, (1) to transfer economic undertakings suitable for socialization, particularly those engaged in the extraction of minerals and the utilization of natural forces, to public (or common) economy (*Gemeinwirtschaft*): (2) in the case of urgent need to regulate publicly the production and distribution of economic goods.

The virtue of this clause depends on the meaning given to the word *Gemeinwirtschaft*, which was sharply distinguished from Socialism by Dr Singheimer, the official reporter on the Constitution. Apparently *Gemeinwirtschaft* implies only public control, whereas Socialism means public ownership. In this sense the law may be said to have been carried out in the mining and the potash industries. A law for the mines was passed at the same time as the socialization law, of which Clause 4 runs :—

In pursuance of the power provided by Clause 2, the utilization of hard coal, brown coal, pressed coal and coke, of water-power and other natural sources of energy, and of the energy derived from them, will be regulated from the point of view of public economy. Simultaneously with this Act, a law for the regulation of the coal economy comes at once into force for that branch of economy.

THE FUTURE OF SOCIALISM

In virtue of this law, the privately owned pits were grouped in eleven district syndicates. Every pit had to join its district syndicate. Together they formed the National Coal Association, which was under the control of a National Coal Council, composed of 60 members, one half of whom were mining employers and miners, 15 of each. The rest were made up of State Officials, technicians and consumers' representatives. Similar regulations were made for the potash industry.

How has this worked ? It has apparently made no perceptible difference, at any rate in regard to the price of coal, which was the chief object in view. For the consumers' representatives on the council have made no move of their own and the miners have steadily followed the initiative of the employers. A leading representative and a Socialist told the socialization Commission that no one could suppose they would vote against the raising of prices which entailed the raising of wages. "We represent the staff or the miners, and the shirt is closer to us than the coat. We must agree to the coal prices unless we want to come under the harrow." Dr Heimann calls the impotence of the consumers and the group egotism of the workmen "the greatest of all the disenchantments that Socialism has experienced in recent years".

GERMANY

This treatment of the privately owned mining industry by no means satisfied the Socialists, and in consequence of pressure from the mining districts the Commission of Inquiry was re-appointed on an enlarged scale, with 23 members, in May 1920. It reported at the end of July. In the meantime, the first election to the new Reichstag had taken place in June under the Constitution prepared by the National Assembly, with the result that the Socialists and the Nationalists (ultra-Conservatives), who would not work together, both went out and a new coalition Government was formed by the middle parties. The Constitution, by Article 156, authorizes the State to take over by legislation privately owned enterprises, with due compensation; and in the case of urgent need to concentrate undertakings on the basis of self-management with the object of securing the co-operation of all classes engaged in production and of regulating the business on the principles of public economy. In this way both what had been done with coal and potash and electricity as well as what it was proposed to do, was "anchored" in the Constitution. In reality, however, it was only proposed to socialize the coal mines, to which attention was more particularly directed.

But nothing was done. The reconstituted

THE FUTURE OF SOCIALISM

inquiry was no more successful in solving the problem than the first one. The Commissioners, who included some of the ablest business men, were agreed that there should be a far-reaching reduction of the capitalist gains in mining. A majority was further in favour of handing over the mines to a single statutory authority and eliminating private ownership altogether. They prepared a draft Bill to that effect. The statutory body to be set up was the German Coal Community, under the control of a National Coal Council and a National Coal Directory. The former was to consist of 100 members including representatives of consumers, as well as workmen, the technical staffs and the State. The minority, which included Walter Rathenau, von Siemens, Wissel, the Minister of Economy, and also the representatives of the Christian and the Hirsch-Duncker trade unions, rejected this proposal on the ground of the national importance of the coal industry, and the danger to its continued successful working involved in the sudden change over. They preferred to prepare the way gradually. This is highly important in view of the present recognition by Socialists, that continued production must be secured. There were, in addition, several individual reservations.

GERMANY

The Report was referred to the National Economic Council and examined by a committee, with the aid of further evidence by experts ; but no agreement was reached, and eventually the plan of nationalizing or socializing the private mines was dropped. Nor has it ever been revived. They contented themselves with the plan of a National Coal Association, already described. The net result is that the industry held most ripe for socialization has not been socialized, but has been consolidated and placed under joint control. The main reason for the failure was the fear of endangering the successful working of the mines. The only other private industry treated in a similar manner is the potash.

As for the state mines belonging to Prussia, they were "commercialized" in 1923. They were turned into a company, of which all the shares are held by the Ministry of Commerce and the Ministry of Finance in equal parts ; but the possibility of a "mixed undertaking" has apparently not been excluded. The law, passed on 9th October, 1923, allows for the issue of other shares. The mines are managed by four expert directors under a supervisory council, composed of representatives of the Government, the Landtag and all the miners' unions. The bad account of their previous management as State enterprises,

THE FUTURE OF SOCIALISM

declared by the first Commission of Inquiry, was fully confirmed by Herr Osterroth, a trade union leader, who has an exceptional knowledge of the industry, and is now one of the directors. He said the State administration was thoroughly bad ; it lacked the power of decision, and had not the freedom of creative effort ; the sense of responsibility died out and every manager squinted upwards to his superior. The same authority reports well of the new undertaking. He says that the company form gives the widest freedom of action in technical, commercial, organizing and social-political relations ; the individual manager has much more responsibility and is not fettered, as he used to be, in his initiative ; favouritism is abolished, and all have to exert themselves to keep their place.

The commercialization of the State mines is part of a general tendency in Germany to-day, for the avoidance of bureaucracy. It has been applied to the railways, all of which belonged to the State, to several of the war industries and to municipal concerns. The movement has been forced by the urgent need of efficiency in the present state of the country, which is recognized by all classes. It is rather away from socialization than towards it, as ordinarily understood, for its essence lies in adopting the methods of capitalist enterprise. If it

GERMANY

proves highly successful, however, it may lead to socialization ; but of that there is no sign in Germany.

That the failure caused great dissatisfaction among the Marxians can be readily understood. They had been led to expect socialization, and with it the relief of all their troubles, as soon as ever political power was gained ; and here it was in their hand and without opposition. The question was dealt with at the Trade Union Congress in June 1919 by Dr Hilferding and Paul Umbreit, both members of the Socialization Commission. Hilferding admitted that a most favourable moment had been lost, but gave no reasons. He said that they had on 9th November "an extraordinarily favourable position in regard to Socialization", and that for three months "wide circles of employers reckoned that their day was over". In particular, "the opinion universally prevailed that for capitalist enterprise in coal mining the hour had struck". And undoubtedly that was the case ; all classes made up their minds to it. There was, indeed, nothing else to expect. Umbreit dotted his i's. He recalled the Communist Manifesto of Marx and quoted the concluding sentence. Then he went on :—

" This fiery call to organization has
[69]

THE FUTURE OF SOCIALISM

dominated the working class for seven decades long, and led them to political, trade union and co-operative organization, inspired them to battle against the economic and political power of Capital and borne them upwards to success after success."

He recalled the leadership of Marx and Lassalle, of Liebknecht and Bebel, and the place taken by Germany at the head of Socialism. He quoted Bebel, who died in 1913, on its victorious advance, and continued :—

" Thus the German working class has been for decades schooled, organized and called to the battle for emancipation. For decades it has set its hopes on the time when the hour of the Capitalist system, the hour of freedom for the proletariat, the hour of the birth of socialistic society should strike. And now that great hour has come. On 9th November 1918 the German proletariat has by their victorious revolution deprived the bourgeoisie of their strongest supports, the monarchy and militarism, and won political power."

And what had they done with it ? They had democratized the country and given

GERMANY

the proletariat political liberty. They had completed this with economic liberty, by giving the workmen an equal say in condition with the employer (works councils). Lastly they had by social law and orders softened the bitterest need, demanded more in taxation from the possessing classes and carried out other reforms. So far so good. But all this was far from fulfilling the historical task of the working class, for there was no socialization in it. And how had they always predicted this socialization? They had awaited the accumulation of wealth, until at last the masses should rise in insurrection and take possession of the means of production. From a world of capitalist superfluity and proletarian privation they would create a new world of universal well-being. Unfortunately they were too late for that, because of the war, which had impoverished the nation. What, then, would become of Germany? They must socialize before it was too late, for Socialism was the only possible way of escape from the existing situation. It was more necessary than ever. But they would not fall into the mistakes of Bolshevism. Some preliminary conditions must be fulfilled; they must have peace, they must build up their economic life, and fully maintain democracy, not only in the State and the municipality, but also in the

THE FUTURE OF SOCIALISM

works. It must be done through Parliament, not by the so-called dictatorship of the proletariat. Scientific Socialism did not seek to make the workmen owners of the enterprises and enjoyers of the products. It was the affair of the whole community, to be carried out in self-controlling bodies, in which managers, staffs and workmen, technicians and consumers must be represented.

So he cleverly brought them round to what had been done, as the path in which they must continue for socialization ; but he warned them that though Socialism could be introduced by political power it could only succeed by its economic superiority, and that it needed a strong dose of idealism. That is the real question ; is it economically superior ? In Russia the answer is emphatically No ; in Germany, when brought face to face with the problem, they were afraid to try.

The changed situation is reflected to a certain extent in the new programme of the Socialist Party, adopted at the Heidelberg Congress in September 1925. It consists, like its Erfurt predecessor, of a preamble and a practical programme. The preamble, which lays down the principles of Socialism, is the important part from the present point of view. The main difference between the old and the new is a

GERMANY

striking modification of the old uncompromising Marxian doctrine. The word *naturnothwendigkeit*, meaning "necessity by a law of nature", disappears, and is replaced by *innerer Gesetzmässigkeit*, which may be translated, "by virtue of internal laws". Then the statement, that "the economic development of bourgeois society necessarily leads to the disappearance of the small concern", becomes much milder. The new statement is that "economic development has by virtue of inherent laws led to the strengthening of the large concern, which more and more presses back the small concern and diminishes its social importance in industry, trade and transport". Thirty-four years earlier the disappearance of the small man was confidently expected on the strength of the Marxian doctrine. The new phraseology recognizes the fact, substantiated by Werner Sombart, that he has not disappeared, and shows no sign of disappearing. The large concern is in addition to the small one, not in place of it; and itself creates fresh small ones, as it goes along.

The growth of the industrial population relatively to the agricultural, which found no place in the Erfurt Programme, is next mentioned; and several minor changes follow. In place of "the workman" being separated from his means of production, we

THE FUTURE OF SOCIALISM

have "the bulk of the producers"; in place of a mere mention of the big landlord we have "a large part of the land is in the hands of the big landlord"; and instead of "the means of production" becoming the monopoly of a relatively small number of capitalists, we have "the economically deciding means of production" undergoing that fate. There follows an entirely new paragraph, on which Kautsky lays much stress. It deals with the new middle class, formed by the salaried staffs and intellectuals of all kinds. It is asserted that with their growth in numbers, they lose more and more the possibility of rising to privileged positions, and that their interests agree in a rising measure with those of the remaining workmen. Is that true of Germany? It certainly is not of other countries, where one of the most remarkable features of disputes is the tendency of the staff to side with the employer against the workmen; and general strikes have been defeated again and again with the ungrudging assistance of intellectuals, who show no sign of solidarity with the strikers.

This middle class appears again in the next paragraph, which states that they too, and not only the proletarians, are denied their full share of the material and cultural progress made possible by the increased forces of production. But a very significant

GERMANY

modification of the old programme is to be noticed here. The new one says that big capital and big landlordism, "seek to monopolize for themselves the results of the co-operative working process"; the old says that capitalists and big landlords do monopolize all the advantages of the changes in working. Another very important modification has to do with the law of increasing misery which is formulated in the Erfurt Programme in unqualified terms. The Heidelberg Programme says that "tendencies are always at work to depress the working classes in their way of living. Only by a constant battle is it possible for them to protect themselves from increasing degradation and to improve their position".

There are other changes in the preamble, but enough has been said to indicate abandonment of the Marxian formula, which is at variance with the course of events. The actual programme is divided into eight sections, one of which deals with economic issues. The first item in this section states that land, minerals and the natural sources of power, which serve the production of energy, are to be withdrawn from capitalist exploitation and transferred to the public service. There is also to be State control over capitalist combined interests, that is, Kartells and trusts; and

THE FUTURE OF SOCIALISM

extension of State, provincial and other public concerns, with avoidance of bureaucracy. A quite modest programme.

In sum, if Russia represents the economic failure of Marxian Socialism, Germany no less represents inability to begin it and a consequent change of objective.

CHAPTER IV

OTHER COUNTRIES

Austria. "Seldom have pilgrims entered on a less delectable promised land, than the political heirs of the Hapsburgs." The sentence is taken from Mr C. A. Macartney's book on *The Social Revolution in Austria*, an impartial account of what has happened there. Of the old empire all that remains to-day, under the title of Austria, is the German-speaking centre, with a population less than that of London, yet containing one of the great capitals of the world. Whether it will eventually join up with Germany is a question for the future; the juncture is possible and in my opinion probable, but not yet. Meantime Austria stands alone, surrounded by nations alien in race and tongue, except for Bavaria. They broke away before the end of the war, in October 1918; and the Kaiser's abdication on 11th November was the recognition of an accomplished fact. The country was then the scene of indescribable turmoil, in which the Socialists came forward and

THE FUTURE OF SOCIALISM

took the lead in restoring order. Their rise in Austria had been much later than in Germany, though Liebknecht preached Marxism in Vienna in 1869. The capital has always been the stronghold of Socialism, and it is to-day the only capital under socialist control outside Russia. Previous to the war they had held their first congress in 1888, under the leadership of Dr Victor Adler, a Socialist of the type of Jaurès, Branting or Masaryk ; but they made no show in Parliamentary life until 1897, when they had 17 members elected to the Reichsrat. In 1901 they secured only 10 seats, but in 1907, under the reformed electoral system then adopted, they advanced suddenly to 87 in a house of 501 ; they had become a party to reckon with. In 1911 they lost five seats, and they were moreover weakened by a nationalist division into German, Czech and Polish. On the other hand, they had some of the best brains in the whole movement, and were strong in the municipalities. These facts will suffice to show the position of the Socialists before the war, into which they threw themselves patriotically, almost without exception.

In the Austrian revolution the Socialists never gained such an absolute command as their German colleagues enjoyed for three months, and the situation was full of

OTHER COUNTRIES

difficulties from which Germany was free ; but for a considerable time, after the first trouble was over, they had sufficient ascendancy to make a beginning with socialization. On 21st October, 1918, the German-Austrian members of the Reichsrat passed a unanimous resolution in favour of forming a Provincial National Assembly, which was done on 30th October. The National Assembly entrusted the Government to a State Council, made up of representatives of all parties. The State Council distributed the ministerial offices impartially, and two fell to the Social Democrats, with two under-secretaryships ; while Dr Renner became secretary to the Council. But this did not express the state of public feeling outside. In the prevailing state of revolutionary excitement the Socialists had the public ear to an extent which gave them an ascendancy that no other party could claim. They alone could exercise a moderating influence on the workmen and prevent the threatened anarchy. It is greatly to their credit that they kept their heads in the general disorder, in which the failure of food and coal combined with the Russian revolution to drive the people on the same road. Their popularity was revealed by the voting for the Constituent Assembly on 16th February, 1919, when they came out the strongest of the three parties, having

THE FUTURE OF SOCIALISM

previously been the weakest. The Social Democrats polled 1,211,814 votes to 1,068,382 of the Christian Socialists and 545,938 of the German Nationalists, who had been the strongest party. The Christian Socialists represented the agricultural population ; they took 63 seats to 69 of the Social Democrats, and 24 of the German Nationalists in a house of 159.

The result was a coalition Government of Social Democrats and Christian Socialists, in which the most important posts were in the hands of the former, with Karl Renner as Chancellor and Minister of the Interior. Otto Bauer, who had returned from war imprisonment in Russia a convinced anti-Bolshevist, was Foreign Minister. This happened on 15th March, and the next few months were taken up with a struggle against Bolshevism, which was for a short time successful in Hungary and in Munich, to the east and west of Austria. Workers' and Soldiers' Councils had been formed during the revolution and in February, 1919, the Workers' Councils united in a single organization. As in Germany the question was whether Austria should follow the example of Russia, and set up a "dictatorship of the proletariat". The Socialists convinced the Workers' Councils that this would mean the suicide of the revolution, and they turned it down. The

OTHER COUNTRIES

Soldiers' Councils followed their example under the same influence, and settled the matter. But the danger was by no means over ; for Bela Kun's ascendancy in Hungary lasted until August, and he used every means to incite the Vienna population to a rising, which was carried out with a certain loss of life on 15th June. That ended the struggle which, as in Germany, was carried on and decided by the people themselves.

So Austria was saved from Bolshevism. What, then, of Socialism ? The Government appointed a Socialization Commission with Bauer as chairman. At the election the Socialists had put forward a tremendous programme :—

“ We will give back to the people the property of the great factory owners, of the mine-owners, the capital of the great banks and trading houses, the estates of the nobles, the Church and the capitalists. . . . The State shall expropriate the great industrial and mining concerns, the great estates and banks.” ¹

Perhaps they would have attempted some measure of this, if they had been returned with a large majority ; but the coalition Government, with the Christian Socialists

¹ *The Social Revolution in Austria*, p. 148.

THE FUTURE OF SOCIALISM

(who are not Socialists at all) so close on their heels, made it impossible. However, Bauer lost no time in getting to work, and did what he could. He fully shares the objections to a State bureaucracy, and he thought out a plan of his own for an alternative. It is, briefly, to combine the State, the workmen and the consumers, especially the co-operative societies, which are pretty highly developed in Austria. He took the State factories developed during the war and "commercialized" them in this way. He began with boots and set up the "United Leather and Boot Factories", in which the State furnished the factory and two co-operative societies, representing the urban and the rural consumers respectively, supplied the capital. This was very successful. The second venture was equally so. It was the "Austrian Drug Store", which took over the provision of drugs from the Medical Supplies Department of the army, and supplied various public institutions. The initial success of these joint undertakings, which had passed at the end of the war from the military to civil administration—quite incompetent to conduct them according to Bauer—encouraged further efforts. The workmen were represented in the management by their trade union, and by the works councils, which were set up by a law passed by the National Assembly at the same time as Bauer's plan.

OTHER COUNTRIES

In October, 1919, he resigned from the Socialization Commission on a change of the Ministry, but his plan was energetically carried on by his successors, and gradually "a whole system of public undertakings", came into existence. They varied considerably in form. Some were purely public; others had a mixture of public and private capital. They were not all converted war industries; some were started to supply new needs. Again the legal form differed; in certain cases the form of a company was preferred. In all of this there was very little socialization in the accepted sense of the term, that is transference from private to public ownership, and as time has gone on there has been less rather than more. In 1923 all the industries derived from the war undertakings were turned into companies, some with mixed capital, and other changes have taken place in the public undertakings. The most distinctively socializing measure passed by the Constituent Assembly, when the Socialists were in control, was a law permitting the State to take a share in the capital of any newly founded companies, or in the raising of fresh capital for existing ones. This proceeding is, perhaps, what Bauer means, when he says that they planted germ cells of the future socialistic organization in the capitalist method of production.

THE FUTURE OF SOCIALISM

Considerable use has been made of it in Vienna, which deserves separate treatment. Of Austria generally, it is only necessary to say that in the general election under the new constitution in the autumn of 1920, the Socialists lost ground as against the other parties. In the voting they changed places with the Christian Socialists, who rose from 63 to 82 seats, while the Socialists lost three and the Nationalists gained two. The Socialists withdrew from the administration and refused invitations to join in a coalition. They felt sore, perhaps, at the result of the election under a democratic constitution they had themselves formed. Mr Macartney thinks that they could have made more impression had they been less narrow, less selfish and less materialistic. "Their period of office did not give the impression that their ranks contained statesmen," though he excepts Otto Bauer. As to its future, he suggests that the next step should be to eliminate its faults. "With all that it has achieved, it remains narrow, bigoted, doctrinaire and materialistic. And nominally fighting for democracy, it has never been above crushing its opponents by means honest or dishonest, forcing minorities to bow to its will, and imposing its ideas by methods which are the reverse of democratic." Such is the verdict of an

OTHER COUNTRIES

impartial and by no means unfair observer on the showing made by Socialists when confronted with the responsibility of governing. But there is Vienna.

It has been already observed that Vienna was the stronghold of Socialism before the war. The revolution has made it so more than ever; for there the Socialists have gained and kept complete control. At the general election of 1911, Vienna accounted for nearly 43 per cent. of the total Socialist vote, yet it had only eight members out of 165 on the City Council. That was due to the constitution, for after the revolution the eight became 100, and in 1925, they had 78 members out of a total of 120. They have evidently lost no popularity during their administration. What have they done? They began by reconstructing the administration of the city, and turning it into a complete social democracy. The governing body is a Council, the members of which are elected by universal suffrage, male and female, at 20 years of age, with proportional representation. Each member represents one of the districts into which the city is divided in proportion to the population. The Council elects the Burgo-master and the Senate, which is a second chamber consisting of 12 members, who are not members of the Council. From the Senate are elected the chairmen of the

THE FUTURE OF SOCIALISM

committees, which have charge of the several departments of business, with the exception of education. They are elected for five years, and must be members of the majority. The Council governs, but in finance the Senate has an independent voice. In 1921 Vienna was separated from Lower Austria and became a State or province in the Austrian Bund; the Burgomaster represents the State as well as the city.

The situation of Vienna, entirely dependent on outside and politically hostile districts for food and fuel, and containing a large class of intellectuals, has been very difficult under a Socialist administration, which has done perhaps as much socializing as could be expected; but there is little or no Socialism, as hitherto understood. A municipal bakery was tried, but was not successful. The difficulty has been to keep things going at all, which does not allow room for extensive economic experiments. The primary importance of maintaining production and its incompatibility with large and sudden economic changes, is well illustrated by Vienna. The chief aim seems to have been to raise the position of the poorer classes, which was very low, by social reforms and financial methods, which have been carried as far as is practicable, without endangering the whole structure, by an elaborate system of graded

OTHER COUNTRIES

taxation. Everything taxable has been taxed up to the limit ; and, what is more, the taxes have been got in, not without great grumbling on the part of those who have to pay them. The public revenue has also been increased by investing in capitalist undertakings. This procedure, referred to above as planting socialist cells in the capitalist organization, has been adopted in Germany too. It is a form of combined organization, which seems more likely to herald the peaceful alliance of the two rather than the swallowing of one by the other. The only other venture in Vienna with a touch of Socialism about it is the town housing. Housing is extraordinarily backward in the town, and the efforts of the Council have been of material benefit ; but they are no more than has been done by London, and innumerable other municipalities without the least thought of Socialism. When compared with the promises put forward at the General Election of the Constituent Assembly, and quoted above, the achievements of the Socialists in Vienna show the difference between promise and performance, and reduce the former to its proper proportions.

Czecho-Slovakia. The situation is entirely different in Czecho-Slovakia. Besides the Czechs (Bohemians), who form about half the population of 13,600,000 (1921), the

THE FUTURE OF SOCIALISM

new State contains to a large extent the mixture of nations, peoples and languages of the old Austrian Empire. There are 3,700,000 Germans, 1,700,000 Slovaks, 1,200,000 Magyars, 300,000 Ruthenians, and 250,000 Poles. This is reflected in Parliament, where the parties number about 20, disposed according to nationality as well as by political principles. The majority has always been held by the Czechish Coalition, which includes Socialists, who were the largest party in both chambers at the election of 1920, but not sufficiently strong to command. In 1925 they lost ground considerably, chiefly to the Communist Party. There are two chambers, both elected by universal suffrage, male and female ; but the age differs, being 25 for the Chamber of Deputies and 35 for the Senate. Ministers are appointed by the President, Professor Masaryk, who is a moderate Socialist.

On 18th October, 1918, the Czechoslovaks declared their independence from Austria, which had been demanded early in the year, and on the 28th they formed a National Council. The country is rich and well divided between agriculture and manufacture and trade. The people are vigorous and forward-looking. They wanted to make their State justify its existence and gain the respect of other nations.

OTHER COUNTRIES

Democracy and social reform were in the air, and they plunged rather hastily into experiments. The first thing that engaged their attention beyond consolidating their position—and as a step towards it—was land reform. In the turmoil caused by the end of the war and the revolution—demobilization, the sick and wounded, the cessation of war industries—they could not deal in detail with land reform, but they prepared for it by passing already on 9th November 1918, an expropriation law prohibiting the sale or mortgaging of registered land without the consent of the Government. This was followed by other preparatory laws in 1919, but nothing further was done that year, except for a law passed in May, giving small farmers the right to purchase the land held on lease from large estates. By the end of 1922, 250,000 acres had been bought by 128,407 small farmers. In 1920 other laws were passed for the break-up of large estates, and in 1921 actual transference began. The land scheduled for expropriation amounted to 10,000,000 acres belonging to 1,730 proprietors, including the Church; of the whole amount about 4,000,000 acres was agricultural land, and the rest forest and water. It was not found possible to parcel out the forests without spoiling them. By 1924 about 426,000 acres had been expropriated and allotted

THE FUTURE OF SOCIALISM

to 117,152 applicants, of whom 62,812 were agriculturists, 32,705 persons of various occupations, and 21,635 had possessed no land. Farm workers represented 10 per cent., and industrial workers 8 per cent. of the whole. In addition, 280,000 acres were taken for small allotments.

This land legislation is undoubtedly referred to by Dr Gruber, when he says that "the first legislators of the Czecho-Slovak Republic solved certain problems in too drastic a manner". Difficulties made themselves felt. One was the lack of capital on the part of landtakers, another was the persons thrown out of work by the transfer. By the end of 1924, 31,400 cases of the latter had been disposed of in various ways; 32.3 per cent. had found employment, 4.4 per cent. had been pensioned, 22.7 per cent. had received an allocation of land and 40.6 per cent. had received compensation in money. A writer in the *International Labour Review* observes of this 40.6 per cent. that their absorption into the labour market would be a matter of anxiety. He also refers to the capital required, and says that the position of the new small landowner is more precarious than that of his fellow-worker in industry; for a single bad season may drive him to extremities. "This exceptionally hazardous

OTHER COUNTRIES

situation, involving elements of great cruelty, has engaged the attention of every recent writer on agrarian reform". He suggests co-operative farming as a remedy, but notes that it has not yet made much way. From 1922 to May 1925 only 97 societies of different kinds were recorded. Count Ledebur, a land-owner, observes in 1926 that the land reform aims at dividing and cutting up the highly cultivated farms of the big landed proprietors, and that "the results are already to be felt in lessening of agricultural production". He also says that the real object is national. Subjects of the national minorities had received only 2 per cent. of the partitioned land, while subjects belonging to the Czech majority had received 98 per cent. "It has even been openly declared by State officials that the object of the land reform is to be found neither in social nor in economical, but in purely national tendencies."

They undoubtedly tried to go too fast ; but the question that interests us here is how far such land reform can be considered Socialism. It depends on the meaning given to the term. The multiplication of small land owners *de jure* is incompatible with the old socialistic idea of no land owners, but to-day some Socialists favour the small man and would at least let him alone. In England, where peasant proprietorship is

THE FUTURE OF SOCIALISM

exceptional, the Labour Party is all for nationalizing the land ; and according to their notions the creation of owner-occupiers, as in Czecho-Slovakia, is contrary to Socialism. But on the continent, where peasant proprietors are very numerous, and would bitterly oppose being turned into tenants of the State, the case is different. Kautsky discusses the question at considerable length in *The Labour Revolution*. It is not easy to make out his opinion, but he is against the splitting up of large estates. "For various reasons", he says, "the breaking up of the large estates would be a shattering catastrophe for a socialist society." He would increase them, as owned by the State ; but would socialize gradually. He suggests that it might be done by the State regularly buying land in the market, and he looks to co-operative farming for the tenants. It is a very long way round for Socialism. Dr Vondruška says that the aim in Czecho-Slovakia has been "a more equitable distribution of the soil", which wears a socialistic air when carried out by compulsory legislation. He says, too, that neither the owners nor the tenant farmers have ever been willing to surrender even the smallest portion of their land for the enlargement of the tiniest peasant farms ; but, on the contrary, they have increased the size of their holdings

OTHER COUNTRIES

by buying up or leasing as much land as they could obtain, while the ordinary farms have been constantly decreasing in size, which has driven the members of farmers' families into the towns or out of the country. That may be a sufficient reason for the step ; but, on the whole, I conclude that the multiplication of small owners is not a move towards Socialism. If that were the intention, they would have been made tenants, not owners. It certainly interferes with the rights of property, but instead of denying them it creates more.

Another doubtful measure is the capital levy, which has been carried out very thoroughly but with disappointing results. It is usually advocated by Socialists, as a way of spoiling the over-rich, and is hotly opposed by Conservatives ; but it seems to me no more Socialistic than a graduated income tax and much less effective. The two are bound to interfere with one another, for if you take away a considerable slice of a man's capital you necessarily lower his income. When the State needs a large sum, as Czecho-Slovakia did, a capital levy may be a legitimate way of obtaining it. But if they had their time over again, I doubt it they would repeat the capital levy.

The chief work has been social reform, as elsewhere ; and in that the Socialists have

THE FUTURE OF SOCIALISM

rendered valuable assistance. Czecho-Slovakia was the first country to ratify the Washington Convention on the eight hours' day, which was a bold step, as the Austrian General Law permitted 11 hours, with 1 hour overtime. Even the Communist Party attaches more importance to social reform than to anything else. Their programme contains a number of robust, but not otherwise noticeable, propositions of that kind. Presumably the party is affiliated to the Third International at Moscow, but it seems to be of a mild order. In 1919, under the stress of revolutionary excitement and inspiration from Russia, the workmen made an attempt to sieze and run some factories, but the effort collapsed, and was voluntarily abandoned. The party is, however, of considerable strength in Parliament. In the 1920 election they had 27 members in the Chamber of Deputies, and 7 in the Senate, and in 1926 these were raised to 41 and 20, which made them nearly equal to the combined Czech and German Socialists, who lost heavily.

Evidence of the progressive character of the Czecho-Slovakian Government is found in their treatment of the extensive State undertakings they had inherited. They have all been "commercialized", including the Post Office, that is, separated from the

OTHER COUNTRIES

political State and placed under independent administration.

Sweden. Sweden differs from the countries previously discussed in that there has been no revolution there ; nor is it, like Czecho-Slovakia, the result of a revolution. But it has the distinction of being the first country in Europe to set up a Socialist Government by the regular democratic procedure, and to have had—in three separate spells—a longer experience of such administration than any other continental State, with the exception of Denmark. The Socialists have never held a majority in the Riksdag, but since the autumn of 1914, they have been the largest party in the Second Chamber, and have gradually increased their ascendancy. They are now the largest party in both chambers. The two chambers, which have equal authority, are differently elected. The First Chamber consists of 150 men and women, not less than 35 years old, who are elected by the County Councils and in towns not represented in the County Councils by specially appointed electors. They are elected for eight years under a system of proportional representation, and the right of voting begins at the age of 28. The Socialists have 52 members in this chamber ; the Conservatives, who are the next largest party, have 44. The Second Chamber is

THE FUTURE OF SOCIALISM

the more democratic of the two. It consists of 230 members, who are elected for four years by all persons who have reached 24 years; the right of voting and of being elected was granted to women in 1921. The Socialists gained 104 seats in 1924, with 65 Conservatives in the second place.

The first Socialist Government was formed in March 1920, by the late Mr Branting, who had led the party since its inauguration in 1887, and had been the sole Socialist member in 1896. It lasted for nine months. He came in again in 1921, when his administration lasted for 18 months, and once more in 1924 for 19 months, though he himself resigned on account of ill health in 1925 and died soon after. These three spells make a total of nearly four years of Socialist Government in the period 1920-26; but it must be remembered that though the Socialists were the largest party, they were kept in office by the support of others, and were not free to do as they pleased. The question that put them in a minority in both chambers on 1st June 1926, and caused their resignation was one of unemployment pay, it is therefore not surprising that they introduced no measures of Socialization. Mr Branting was a cautious and moderate Socialist, who wanted to see his way clear before taking any steps, though his programme was essentially

OTHER COUNTRIES

Marxian. Accordingly he followed the German example when he found himself in office in 1920, and appointed commissions of inquiry into socialization and democracy. But they were not like the German inquiries, which were of an *ad hoc* character and were undertaken because the people were demanding immediate socialization. The Swedish investigations were unhurried and thorough ; they were carried on from year to year by competent students, who included well-known economists, politicians of different parties, representatives of employers and of trade unions. An idea of its thorough character may be gathered from the fact that the first volume to be published was a study of England from 1760 to 1920, by Mr G. F. Steffen, a well-known writer on social and labour questions, who made use of extraordinarily full sources of information. It consists of over 500 pages, and it was published in 1921. Companion volumes deal with Austria, Denmark, Germany, the United States, Australia and New Zealand. In addition there are separate volumes, which deal with the socialization of particular industries. The railways were the first to be discussed.

The railways in Sweden are owned partly by the State, which constructed the main lines, and partly by private companies. The Commission recommended reconstruc-

THE FUTURE OF SOCIALISM

tion of the State lines, not the absorption of the private lines in the State system. Presumably they thought that the first step was to make the State lines efficient. To this end they proposed the transference of the railways to an independent public body, which would be free of political influences in its management. They laid it down that the undertaking should yield a surplus, equivalent to the normal interest on capital with an additional percentage for risk; and that the labour conditions should be determined in the ordinary way by agreement, but with representation on the administrative body. The statutory railway organization would consist of a chairman and 28 members, 8 nominated by the Government, 8 by the Riksdag, 6 by the railwaymen, and 6 by consumers. The proposal conforms to the modern idea of a State undertaking, but since it remains a proposal no more need be said about it, or about the other economic departments of the State. They are, however, very considerable and will become important, if the modern tendency continues.

From this point of view it is interesting to know how the question strikes the Socialist party, who are out at the moment of writing, but may return at the next general election. Both Mr Branting and his successor, Mr R. J. Sandler, have shown

OTHER COUNTRIES

that they appreciate recent events. They agree that socialization is required in the general interest, but that it will be gradual, and will take many different forms. "The problem is not to be solved by some scheme drawn up for all time", says Branting. "Experience from other countries testifies sufficiently to the dangers of seeking to move violently the present productive system. A central point of view is that production must not fall." He recognizes the stimulating influence of profit and says: "it would be blinding oneself to obvious facts to repudiate the significance of this stimulus to production. But", he goes on, "a well-balanced combination of different forms of social and private production may be expected to give a much better result from the stand-point of society". Mr Sandler insists on guarantees against bureaucracy. "So State enterprise in its popular, common sense disappears; and in its stead appears the socialized self-management of productive enterprises under representation of different interests." He also says: that "large portions of the economic life are still economically unripe for socialization". They must be left to capitalism and the starting of new capitalist enterprises must be permitted; for "socialization can and should proceed without disturbing economic freedom".

THE FUTURE OF SOCIALISM

The effect on these general observations, coming from a party which once believed in Marxism and the "proletarian revolution", is unmistakable. There is a Communist party, with 5 members in the Lower Chamber, but it is split and weak.

Denmark. Denmark has had a Socialist Government, under Mr Stanning, since April 1924; but it has made no attempt at socialization, being fully occupied with social reforms of various kinds. The Socialists are less strong than in Sweden. They are the largest party in the Lower Chamber (Folketing), where they have 55 seats against the 45 of the Liberals; but in the Upper Chamber (Landsting) they are only the second largest party, with 25 seats to 31 held by the Liberals. They are supported in social reforms by the Radicals, who have 20 members in the Folketing; but their power is limited. Nor do conditions in Denmark lend themselves to socialization.

Belgium. That does not apply to Belgium, which has coal mines and large industrial interests. There the Socialists, under the leadership of M. Vandervelde, have taken part in two coalition Governments, on equal terms with the Centre (Catholics) since June 1925. In these circumstances it goes without saying that no measure of socialization has been

OTHER COUNTRIES

attempted ; but on the other hand 3,000 miles of railways have been transferred from the State to a national company, controlled by a composite body, on which railwaymen and consumers are represented. This is in accordance with the well-known views of M. Vandervelde, who has long been a protagonist of the autonomous management of State undertakings, which has now become general on the Continent.

Great Britain. The Socialist Party, which still calls itself the Labour Party, has gained greatly in strength since the war. In 1922 it became the second largest party in the House of Commons, and in January 1924, the Liberals made common cause with it to turn out the Conservatives ; when the party, being the official Opposition, was invited to form a Government and did so, under Mr J. R. MacDonald. But their lease of office only ran for some nine months, and since they depended on Liberal support, they could naturally make no move in the direction of Socialization or nationalization, as it is more frequently called. They were turned out under the suspicion of being susceptible to Bolshevik influence. But the whole episode of a Socialist Ministry was unique, since they were not even the largest party in the House of Commons. At the general election in November 1924, they polled 5½ million votes and returned

THE FUTURE OF SOCIALISM

151 members, against 7½ million votes, with 412 members, for the Conservatives. The present prospect is extremely uncertain, as the women between 21 and 30, who will be entitled to vote at the next election, number several millions: and a violent split has occurred in the Labour Party. It is no more than is always liable to occur, and has often occurred, but it has come at an inopportune moment, with a general election in sight. Moreover it is enhanced by the decision of the Trades Union Congress at least to try the policy of co-operation with the employers. This body, which constitutes the chief support of the Labour Party, has turned round since the general strike of 1926, and the change must affect the policy of the party. The official programme declares for the transference to public ownership of the coal, transport, power and life insurance industries and of the land. It is, therefore, definitely socialistic, though of the evolutionary type.

Australia. The advance of Socialism in Europe was anticipated in Australia, where the experience of a partly Socialist Government was attempted so far back as 1904. In 1910 the Australian Labour Party entered into full power in the Commonwealth Government, with a programme declaring for the State ownership of

OTHER COUNTRIES

monopolies and the extension of State and municipal enterprise. An Act was passed for the nationalization of monopolies, but decisively rejected on a referendum. When the war broke out the Socialists held the Commonwealth and three of the provincial Governments; but no socialization took place, unless the establishment of a Commonwealth Bank is so considered. During the war, patriotism prevailed over Socialism, except in Queensland, where a Socialist Government was installed in 1915. It has been in power ever since, and its experience therefore exceeds that of Russia by two years. But it has been of a totally different character. The Government has contented itself with establishing State enterprises in competition with private, with varied results. Several have done well, particularly in the railway refreshment rooms, while others have accumulated debts and some have been given up. The establishment of competitive public enterprises is an interesting development, which will probably lead to more socialization if they prove superior; but that cannot yet be said. The sale of the Commonwealth line of steamships is a blow to Socialism. The protests of Socialists reveal the difference between them and the community. They would maintain the line on principle regardless of its economic effects; but

THE FUTURE OF SOCIALISM

the public interest demanded its abandonment on proof of continued inefficiency, after transference to an independent Board, and the writing off of eight millions of capital. The case is instructive. On the other hand, the success of the National Railways under Sir Henry Thornton in Canada, where there is comparatively little Socialism, shows the opposite side of the same problem. Efficiency is the test for the community.

CHAPTER V

THE FUTURE

I have now discussed those countries in which the Socialist Party has advanced to complete or to partial power, and I have shown what has been done and attempted in them towards the realization of the ideals of Socialism. It is evidently a more difficult task than most of its advocates had supposed. In the early days of Socialism, they were so convinced of the merits of their proposals that they thought a voluntary system would suffice, because within a short time everyone would recognize its superiority to the existing state of things. But they had no clear idea of the object or how to attain it, with the exception of Saint-Simon. They lost themselves in a multitude of irrelevancies and produced a bewildering profusion of proposals, which made them a laughing-stock. Then the idea of legislative compulsion gained ground. For this democracy was necessary. The Chartists were the first to take up the idea ; their campaign was for a thoroughly

THE FUTURE OF SOCIALISM

democratic constitution, which would introduce Socialism as a matter of course. Later the two were definitely coupled on the Continent in the term "Social Democrats". Germany took the lead, with the Marxian class war in the foreground. The democracy would signify the victory of the proletariat as the most numerous class; and they would at once establish Socialism. They did not lose sight of Socialism, but took it as a matter of course, and paid no attention to its form. The State, representing the community, would take over the land and the means of production, which seemed to them a simple matter. Meanwhile their object was democracy, on which many hard battles and general strikes were fought in different countries.

Now full democracy has come. All the six points of the Charter have been granted, except annual Parliaments, which seem to be no longer desired. And more than the six points; for adult suffrage now extends to women, and the initiative and referendum are in the hands of the people in one country after another. It is not possible to devise a democracy more complete than that existing in several countries. Yet Socialism tarries, outside Russia, where it failed so completely that it had to be given up in favour of a half-way system which Lenin called State

THE FUTURE

Capitalism. Two attempts have been made to check the capitalism in it, but both had to be abandoned after a short trial, under the inexorable pressure of economic facts; while the constant efforts to stimulate the State part of it into efficiency have not succeeded.

The spectacle has not been lost on Socialists in other countries. It has made them cautious. They perceive that Socialism can only be introduced by degrees. Some have always maintained this, especially in England; but since Marx gained the sway on the Continent the idea of a complete proletarian turn-over has prevailed up to the present period. The example of Russia has destroyed that idea for Socialists. Those who still cling to it call themselves Communists. The others think the change will be confined to industries or sections of economic life that are "ripe" for socialization, and that the process will gradually extend to others as they become ripe. But they want to begin with some chosen item such as coal mines or banks, or the milk supply of towns. Their programmes have become much more modest; they no longer speak of socializing the whole means of production. But even a beginning sticks fast; and here democracy has proved a great disappointment. It might have placed complete

THE FUTURE OF SOCIALISM

power in the hands of Socialists ; it was expected to do so, and had there been a general desire for socialization, it would undoubtedly have done so. That may come ; the next general election in Great Britain may bring it. But so far it has not come in any democratic country, outside Australia. The example set by Russia has sunk in ; it is a most valuable lesson. It has shown the primary importance of production, and placed it in the fore-ground. Production must not be interrupted and must not fall ; on the contrary it must be increased. So mere State ownership will not do. That has completely gone in the opinion of Continental Socialists. As Kautsky says, " it no longer comes into consideration for socialization ". They have found a remedy in the commercialization of State undertakings, which leaves them in the possession of the State, but gives them flexibility and freedom in the management. It is doubtless a great improvement on bureaucracy for undertakings already owned by the State ; but is it good enough for the rest, for the undertakings that are at present privately owned ? They have applied it in Russia, and yet, production has fallen. It is not surprising that democracy hesitates and that many Socialists themselves are doubtful. Had the results of the Russian experiments been as success-

THE FUTURE

ful as they are the reverse, we should have seen a very different sight. We should have seen Socialism marching proudly and confidently forward in several countries, if not in all, instead of standing back and waiting.

The community has no objection to common ownership; that is obvious from the various undertakings which are communally owned and on the whole with general approval, if without enthusiasm. But before the transference of other undertakings is made on principle, the community wants the assurance that it will be successful; and the advantage of the Russian experiment is that it has put the question to the practical test, with highly unfavourable results. For Socialists, principle is sufficient, but the community must have the goods; it is a question of life and death, about which there must be certainty. If the decision in Russia had rested with the community, instead of the Communist Party, they would not have sanctioned the experiments. It was the passive resistance of the community which compelled the new economic policy and has frustrated the attempts to check it. The passive resistance of the peasant community wrecked half of Lenin's plan at the outset, and it remains to-day an impregnable rock.

The capitalist system is no accident, nor

THE FUTURE OF SOCIALISM

is it the arbitrary creation of the owners ; it is a natural development. What is the cause of it ? The answer was given by Sir William Bragg in his presidential address to the British Association. He said this :—

“ It is a long step from the simple work-shop of the old single-handed craftsman to the vast, complex factory of modern industry. The change which has brought us to this new kind of modern craftsmanship, this dependence on machinery, with its wealth of production, its clattering, bustling activity, and its compelling influence on the lives of all, is due to nothing less or more than the urgent wish of the individual to better his own condition, and, in his disinterested moods, the condition of his neighbours. . . . Modern craftsmanship with all its noise and ugliness, gives food and clothing, warmth and interest, to millions who otherwise must die. ”

That is true. The urgent wish to better his own condition is the efficient cause. This urgent wish is one of the properties which distinguish man from the other animals. He is always striving to alter his environment to suit himself ; he cannot let anything alone, but must dominate his sur-

THE FUTURE

roundings, including his fellow man, which is the cause of war. And since he has mastered the spoken and written word the process of improvement is progressive. Different races have different faculties, and in our own epoch the advantage lies with the Western nations who have mastered some of Nature's secrets. In other ages, when the Western lands were inhabited by savages, the initiative lay with Oriental peoples. We know now something of the craftsmanship of Egypt, Assyria and Sumer. But always and everywhere man chooses the way of least resistance to get that improvement in material conditions which he always craves. And the way of least resistance has led him step by step to the capitalist system of to-day.

The steps have been traced with a wonderful fullness of knowledge by Werner Sombart in his remarkable treatise on "Modern Capitalism". He shows us a continual and gradual process of organic development, like that of an animal or a plant, in which there is nothing accidental or arbitrary, but in which every cell fulfils its function in the task of preserving and improving the common life. That capitalism has preserved and improved the common life is now admitted, though grudgingly, by all reasonable Socialists, who have abandoned the old conception that it is a

THE FUTURE OF SOCIALISM

monstrous aberration invented by wicked men for their own benefit. That it has been so used by wicked men is quite true, but they did not create it ; and the economists, who encouraged its creation, were the reverse of wicked. They were ardently humane and right within limits. Only in their reaction against the evils of State control they went to the opposite extreme and invested *laissez faire* with merits which it could not have, with men as they are. It became a slogan, and for a time individual freedom for owners was rampant. But not for long. The abuse of their freedom created a reaction, which compelled the interference of the State in a progressive code of labour legislation and forced trade unionism into existence. So we got the benefit of free-enterprise while its abuses were progressively checked so far as is possible in an imperfect world. In the course of its development certain services have become publicly owned, not from any principle, but because it seemed expedient for the improvement of life.

While all this was going on Socialism made its appearance. It was a movement of idealists, which arose when the abuses of *laissez faire* were at their worst, aggravated by the results of the Napoleonic wars. These idealists wanted to put an end to the evils they saw about them by some great

THE FUTURE

and sudden economic change. Beyond this they did not agree. Having no clearness of aim they differed inexhaustibly about the change and the way to accomplish it. Partial unanimity was secured by Marx, but at the cost of abandoning the future scheme to the future. He relied on the class war, which would get ever worse until the proletariat arose in their might and put an end for ever to poverty and oppression ; but what form the new order would take he left to the victorious proletariat.

But economic changes do not take place like that. The law of improving life forbids it. They believed in Marx and attempted the class revolution by force in Russia, with the result that millions died of starvation. They will not try it anywhere else. But what will they do ? Assuming that they have the power, they will take the way of least resistance and begin cautiously with the easiest items, which differ in different countries. In Germany and in Great Britain, for instance, it will probably be the coal mines, in Sweden other mines or water power and hydro-electric plant. But first they must know exactly the form that the new State enterprise will take. In Germany and elsewhere that has been settled ; it will be an independent statutory company. Here it has not even been

THE FUTURE OF SOCIALISM

seriously considered; the crude scheme of the Miners' Federation has not the smallest chance of acceptance. Months will go by in discussing this preliminary question. It is not as though there were any unity in the Labour Party, except for denunciation in a position of irresponsibility. The moment the practical problem is approached dissensions appear. And meanwhile the present owners and managers will hold their hands, uncertain of what is going to happen. So will many of the miners, in the expectation of great advantages. Production is certain to fall and to raise an outcry from consumers, which may upset the whole project. The principle of continuous production cannot be defied in a constitutional country. In other countries, where they have made better preparations, the first steps will be easier; but in any case when they have been taken there will be a long pause to see how it works. Progress will be slow.

That there will be progress is certain, but what forms it will take is most uncertain. However, some things can be affirmed with confidence. One is that no simple uniform system is possible. The course of evolution tends always to multiplicity and diversity. There will be new arrangements added to the old, much of which will remain. But the new arrangements will be determined

THE FUTURE

by the common interests, not by any socialistic principle. Just as the common interests compelled the progressive restriction of Individualism before Socialism had gained any power, so will they restrict the action of Socialism whenever and wherever it gains power. The new arrangements will come as social reforms. Among them will be an extension of public ownership, especially of natural sources of power ; but I think the main change in this direction will lie in placing monopolies or businesses which threaten to become monopolies under public control, and in joint enterprises in which public and private capital are mixed. There are many examples of the latter on the Continent, and the merger between the cable companies and the beam wireless shows that the same movement is under way in Great Britain.

It is impossible to see very far into the future, or to say what will happen when the population of the Western countries is stationary or declining, which will happen in a few years' time if the present movement continues. But the desire for improved material conditions will continue, and science will continue to find the means for satisfying it, even when the pressure of population has ceased. I am inclined, however, to agree with Sombart when he says that we must accustom ourselves to

THE FUTURE OF SOCIALISM

the thought that there is no great difference between a stabilized and regulated Capitalism and a technified and rationalized Socialism. They tend to come slowly together. Meanwhile, the chief work of the Socialists lies in social reform. They are what used to be called Radicals ; their programmes show it plainly. The Communists are the Socialists of old.

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CLASSIFIED INDEX

GENERAL		PAGE
Daedalus, or Science and the Future.	J. B. S. Haldane	5
Icarus, or the Future of Science.	Bertrand Russell	5
Tantalus, or the Future of Man.	F. C. S. Schiller	6
Quo Vadimus? Glimpses of the Future.	E. E. Fournier D'Albe	6
Socrates, or the Emancipation of Mankind.	H. F. Carhill	16
What I Believe.	Bertrand Russell	5
Sibylla, or the Revival of Prophecy.	C. A. Mace	13
The Next Chapter.	André Maurois	18
*Kalki, or the Future of Civilization.	S. Radhakrishna	4
Diogenes, or the Future of Leisure.	C. E. M. Joad	23
The Dance of Giva, Life's Unity and Rhythm.	Collum	15

MARRIAGE AND MORALS

Hypatia, or Woman and Knowledge.	Dora Russell	7
Lysistrata, or Woman's Future and Future Woman.	A. M. Ludovici	7
Hymen, or the Future of Marriage.	Norman Haire	18
Thrasymachus or the Future of Morals.	C. E. M. Joad	7
Birth Control and the State.	C. P. Blacker	12
*Romulus, or the Future of the Child.	R. T. Lewis	4
Lares et Penates, or the Home of the Future.	H. J. Birnstingl	21

SCIENCE AND MEDICINE

Gallio, or the Tyranny of Science.	J. W. N. Sullivan	16
Archimedes, or the Future of Physics.	L. L. Whyte	20
Eos, or the Wider Aspects of Cosmogony.	J. H. Jeans	23
Hermes, or the Future of Chemistry.	T. W. Jones	20
Prometheus, or Biology and the Advancement of Man.	H. S. Jennings	8
Galatea, or the Future of Darwinism.	W. Russell Brain	8
Apollonius, or the Future of Psychical Research.	E. N. Bennett	16
Metanthropos, or the Future of the Body.	R. C. Macfie	22
Morpheus, or the Future of Sleep.	D. F. Fraser-Harris	21
The Conquest of Cancer.	H. W. S. Wright	8
Pygmalion, or the Doctor of the Future.	R. McNair Wilson	8
Automaton, or the Future of the Mechanical Man.	H. S. Hatfield	24

INDUSTRY AND THE MACHINE

Ouroboros, or the Mechanical Extension of Mankind.	G. Garrett	12
Vulcan, or the Future of Labour.	Cecil Chisholm	18
*Typhoeus, or the Future of Socialism.	Arthur Shadwell	4
Hephaestus, or the Soul of the Machine.	E. E. Fournier D'Albe	7
Artifex, or the Future of Craftsmanship.	John Gloag	12
Pegasus, or Problems of Transport.	J. F. C. Fuller	11
Aeolus, or the Future of the Flying Machine.	Oliver Stewart	17
Wireless Possibilities.	A. M. Low	10

WAR

Janus, or the Conquest of War.	William McDougall	17
Paris, or the Future of War.	B. H. Liddell Hart	10
Callinicus, a Defence of Chemical Warfare.	J. B. S. Haldane	6

FOOD AND DRINK

Lucullus, or the Food of the Future.	Olga Hartley and C. F. Leyel	14
Bacchus, or the Future of Wine.	P. Morton Shand	20

* In preparation, but not yet published.

CLASSIFIED INDEX

SOCIETY AND THE STATE	PAGE
Archon, or the Future of Government. Hamilton Fyfe . . .	18
Cain, or the Future of Crime. George Godwin . . .	21
Autolycus, or the Future for Miscreant Youth. R. G. Gordon . . .	23
Lycurgus, or the Future of Law. E. S. P. Haynes . . .	10
Stentor, or the Press of To-Day and To-Morrow. David Ockham . . .	17
Nuntius, or Advertising and its Future. Gilbert Russell . . .	12
Rusticus, or the Future of the Countryside. Martin S. Briggs . . .	17
Procrustes, or the Future of English Education. M. Alderton Pink . . .	14
Alma Mater, or the Future of the Universities. Julian Hall . . .	24
Apella, or the Future of the Jews. A Quarterly Reviewer . . .	15
Eutychus, or the Future of the Pulpit. Winifred Holtby . . .	24
*Vicisti Galilaeae? or The Church of England. E. B. Powley . . .	4

GREAT BRITAIN, THE EMPIRE, AND AMERICA

Cassandra, or the Future of the British Empire. F. C. S. Schiller . . .	6
Caledonia, or the Future of the Scots. G. Malcolm Thomson . . .	19
Albyn or Scotland and the Future. C. M. Grieve . . .	19
Hibernia, or the Future of Ireland. Bolton C. Waller . . .	22
*Columbia, or the Future of Canada. George Godwin . . .	4
*Achates, or Canada in the Empire. W. Eric Harris . . .	4
*Shiva, or the Future of India. R. J. Minney . . .	4
Plato's American Republic. J. Douglas Woodruff . . .	13
Midas, or the United States and the Future. C. H. Bretherton . . .	11
Atlantis, or America and the Future. J. F. C. Fuller . . .	11

LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

Pomona, or the Future of English. Basil de Selincourt . . .	14
Breaking Priscian's Head. J. Y. T. Greig . . .	21
Lars Porsena, or the Future of Swearing. Robert Graves . . .	15
Delphos, or the Future of International Language. E. Sylvia Pankhurst . . .	16
Scheherazade, or the Future of the English Novel. John Carruthers . . .	19
Thamyris, or Is There a Future for Poetry? R. C. Trevelyan . . .	9
The Future of Futurism. John Rodker . . .	14
Mrs Fisher or the Future of Humour. Robert Graves . . .	24

ART, ARCHITECTURE, MUSIC, DRAMA, ETC.

Euterpe, or the Future of Art. Lionel R. McColvin . . .	11
Proteus, or the Future of Intelligence. Vernon Lee . . .	9
Balbus, or the Future of Architecture. Christian Barman . . .	15
Orpheus, or the Music of the Future. W. J. Turner . . .	13
Terpander, or Music and the Future. E. J. Dent . . .	13
Iconoclastes, or the Future of Shakespeare. Hubert Griffith . . .	19
Timotheus, or the Future of the Theatre. Bonamy Dobrée . . .	9
Heraclitus, or the Future of Films. Ernest Betts . . .	22

SPORT AND EXPLORATION

Atalanta, or the Future of Sport. G. S. Sandilands . . .	20
Fortuna, or Chance and Design. Norwood Young . . .	23
Hanno, or the Future of Exploration . . .	22

MISCELLANEOUS

Narcissus, an Anatomy of Clothes. Gerald Heard . . .	9
Perseus, of Dragons. H. F. Scott Stokes . . .	16

* In preparation, but not yet published.

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